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WITH THE

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BEFORE THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF 1876.

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THE PERIOD FROM THE

FOUNDING OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

IN THE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO THE

COMMENCEMENT OF THE WAR OF THE REVOLUTION.

BY THE

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Centennial Historical Discourses.

FROM THE FOUNDING OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH TO THE WAR OF THE REVOLUTION.

PRESBYTERIANS, unlike others of all the chief denominations in our favored nation, came to the heritage which they have by this time, with little or no incorporation at the first. Episcopalians, Congregationalists, Reformed Dutch, Swedes, Baptists, Methodists, Lutheran and Reformed Germans,—all came at the beginning in bands of some previous organization or compact in the Old World for the purpose of settlement here in the way of colonization or mission at least, in order to prepare the way for transplanting the old or new sodalities of other lands.* The most remarkable fact which distinguishes our beginning is that every attempt

* *History of the Presbyterian Church*, by Dr. Charles Hodge, Part I., p. 21.

of this kind was foiled by some baleful disaster. The earliest failure on record, probably, was that of the Eagle's Wing, a ship freighted for America in 1637 with ministers and people from Scotland and Ireland, to follow the example of the Puritans who had so recently embarked from England and successfully reached these shores. Everything seemed to be well appointed for conveying to a friendly haven here a compacted Presbyterian body, in full shape, as a model of elderships already made, and sure to begin a commonwealth of session, presbytery and synod. But the sea wrought and was tempestuous, and storms of heaven compelled them to return.* John Bramhall, archbishop of Armagh, who represented prelacy in Ireland, lashed the disappointed voyagers with ridicule in Latin verse. But Samuel Rutherford, of Scotland, with prophetic sympathy, saw deeper into the mystery of that result, and wrote, in one of those letters which have a saintly fragrance for all generations, "I would not have you think it strange that your journey to New England has got such a dash. It hath, indeed, made my heart heavy, but I know that it is no dumb Providence, but a speaking one, whereby the Lord speaks his mind to you, though for the present ye do not well understand what he saith."

* Reed's *History of the Presbyterian Church, Ireland.*

The God of our fathers continued, however, to speak in this way. A plan for colonizing America with their own disciples was approved by some seventy members of the Westminster Assembly before their session ended, but the civil war hindered its execution.* Immediately after the battle of Dunbar, Oliver Cromwell sent shiploads of Scotchmen to be sold in these plantations for the expenses of their passage. And after the Restoration, Charles II. sent his prisoners from the risings of Pentland and Bothwell to be sold in like manner from Boston to Charleston, at any price that might pay for transporting them to exile. But all this, of course, was cruel dispersion, and not the pilgrimage of churches. Schemes in Scotland to fill emigrant ships with Covenanters taken from the mountain gorges and the filthy prisons, where only they could escape the dragoons of Claverhouse, though favored by wealthy patrons and prompted by the persecuting government itself, were always dashed by some adversity—perhaps a spiteful arrest of the embarkation at the very point of departure, crazy ships which could not make the passage, desolating fevers on shipboard, or a pestilential home awaiting them at the place of their destination, as it was at Port Royal in South Carolina. Something always turned up to baffle and disperse a

* Webster's *History of the Presbyterian Church in America.*

transported Presbyterianism. The last enterprise of this kind was the saddest of all. A noble confessor, of whom the world was not worthy, son of a wealthy patriot who had done much service to the State—George Scot of Pitlochie—for the crime of harboring John Welsh in his house and following him in "the preaching of the fields," had been ruined in his patrimony by insatiate fines and broken in health by cruel imprisonment, and at length permitted to leave his country with his life, provided he would take with him, at his own expense, a cargo of similar offenders to a settlement somewhere in East Jersey. With wise and persevering aim he determined to gather a Presbyterian church for his company—Archibald Riddel for the minister, John Fraser, a candidate for the ministry, elders and deacons and people of the best condition, Bibles and psalm books and Confessions of Faith. More than double the number of pilgrims that had filled the Mayflower at Plymouth, as near the beginning of the century as this was the end, crowded the ship of Pitlochie, and superior, perhaps, to any shipload of men and women that ever weighed anchor in passing over to America, estimating their social position at home along with their intelligence and piety and devotion to the liberty of Christ. But the depth of ocean claimed that sainted

colony for its own. The master of the ship was brutally inhuman. Their provisions were spoiled, a deadly fever seized the passengers and dropped them in the sea, the great majority, including that heroic George himself and his wife, and all of his except one married daughter.*

These memorials of peculiar adversity are now, indeed, as Rutherford would say, "a speaking Providence" to us, and we may understand the meaning. It was that Presbyterianism, "whose seed is in itself after his kind," should be indigenous upon American soil, and show here as nowhere else its innate and incomparable force of organization; that no ready-made consolidation should be imported here, with transplanted shape or exotic tradition, to find its genesis in accidents of European history for all coming time. The seeds of Westminster, wafted hither, as their field is the world, must come like the thistledown, detached from one another and floating individually, as if borne to be dispersed, and growing ripe only to be scattered abroad by every wind that blows. Like Abraham, the man of this faith must receive in solitary exile the promise that a nation shall be born of him and all this wilderness shall be the possession of his principles. It was appointed of God that the polity of Presbyterians, like each man's own

* Wodrow and Webster.

pocket-Bible, should be an individual conviction before it became a conventional arrangement, gathered with private judgment from inspired pages, and written on the table of the heart before it had occasion to bind itself about the neck and adorn the hands of a great denomination.

So it had sprung forth at the first Reformation, when Protestantism, to the four-fifths of its whole extension, emerged, a Presbyterian organism in all the leading features of its visibility. So it had sprung forth at the second reformation, in Puritan mightiness, with the overthrow of Tudor and Stuart prelacy in England, when the fallow grounds of civil and religious liberty were ploughed so deeply at the springtide of the English commonwealth. Never before did truth so spring out of the earth and righteousness look down from heaven at the work of symbolism, without apology to be made any more, in a creed, and without a bias in the body, religious or political, as when the hundred and twenty-one divines, along with thirty statesmen illustrious for ability and learning, were summoned to construct our standards in the chapel of Henry the Seventh. And now the virgin soil of a new world was to have a like spontaneous growth of the same model, and that beyond the reach of any of that reactionary influence which has always been lurking

in the dormitories of spiritual despotism, through the Old World.

Hence that obscurity which hides from us the precise date and particular place at which the first Presbyterian organization was made in our country. It is always hard to tell the first blade of corn that appears in a field over which the seed has been scattered in season or out of season. Long Island has claimed it for Jamaica. But more than twenty years before, McNish, the first Presbyterian minister there, moved for an eldership and a presbytery. Riddel, the minister whom Pitlochie selected, was laboring in 1685 at Woodbridge. New Jersey has therefore claimed it; but the ministry of Riddel was transient as a missionary tour; he returned in a little time to Scotland. So Maryland has claimed it, and historians generally concede this claim; because, in answer to an application from Col. Stevens in 1680 to the presbytery of Laggan, Ireland, Francis McKemie came to Maryland in the year 1682 and began to organize churches at once. And yet in 1684 he wrote to Increase Mather from Elizabeth River, in Virginia, that his lot had been providentially cast among "a poor and desolate people" there, who had lost their "dissenting minister" by death in August of 1683. It is evident, therefore, that soon after he came to this country he was laboring on the

east branch of Elizabeth River, Norfolk county, Va., as the successor of a dissenting, and probably Presbyterian, minister, whose settlement there had been indefinitely earlier.

But beyond all question, Francis McKemie, the Irishman, born in Donegal and educated among the Scottish universities, began the organizing of our Church throughout this land, with abounding missionary toil to gather it and amazing skill of administration to settle it. Of course he brought his convictions of truth and order with him to work with and not to speculate about as an alterable Presbyterianism, which might be made something other than it had been in order to suit American people. His errand was to plant what he already knew and believed in. And whilst he wrote for help in all directions, to Boston and to London, where Congregational and Presbyterian unions existed, it was to Ireland he would go back, through all perils of the sea, to bring over men like himself in culture and conviction, to carry on his work and extend it, as he did in 1705, when he brought with him John Hampton and George McNish.

The first presbytery met in 1706 at Freehold, N. J., soon after his return with such recruits, and he was the moderator. It consisted of eight ministers, including the one ordained at that meeting, with as many ruling elders as might be

present, and who were present on the rolls of that initial period (which are extant) in as large proportion as they have ever attended since. The members were all Scotch-Irish, excepting one, the pastor of Philadelphia, Jedediah Andrews, who was from Massachusetts; Francis McKemie, John Hampton, George McNish, Samuel Davis, John Wilson, Nathaniel Taylor and John Boyd were the other ministers; and the record shows that everything proceeded with the same order and the same transaction and the same parlance of the minute as if the presbytery of Laggan itself had been transported bodily to Freehold, as they had resolved that it should be if Usher had not mitigated at that very time the yoke of prelacy under which they were groaning in Ireland.* To say, therefore, that American Presbyterianism is "its own type," different from the system everywhere else, must be either untrue in the light of our authentic annals or a mere truism in historical averment, as much as to say that French and Genevan and Holland and English and Scotch and Irish Presbyterianism is each its own type. There is but one type of what is divinely true, since the Archetype ascended to "give" a pattern from "the mount." And if there be anything peculiar in calling this American, it must be the perfect freedom with

* See *Records*, edited by Dr. Wm. M. Engles, Board of Publication.

which it works off here everything that shaped or constrained it elsewhere by "the commandments of men."

Francis McKemie himself was a type of the American minister, more complete, probably, than any other man ever born and educated on our own soil through all our generations. Intensely individual and yet many-sided, firm yet versatile, thoughtful and practical, devoted to one thing and occupied with many things, he was indeed the father of that "peculiar" body, the presbyterate of this denomination, and the only "priesthood" we have except our people. Beginning with a good education, soundness in the faith and soberness of mind, to try the religion of his fathers in the experiment of life, making all circumstances yield to its importance, taming the wilderness with its culture, and founding customs, laws and constitutions of social and civil advancement according to its paramount and original norm, he came as a missionary and lived like an apostle; aggressive, obeying God rather than man; loyal to Cæsar, but never abashed before his tribunals; working with his own hands, though at the business of a merchant, and giving to the Church of his own substance more than he received from her all the days of his life.

Having preached some time at Barbadoes on

his way to this country, it was at "the Barbadoes store" in this city that he preached the first Presbyterian sermon at Philadelphia in the year 1692, some six years before the settlement of the first pastor, Mr. Andrews.

The care of all the churches was upon him; and no itinerant ever journeyed so much on the coast of our country in seeking "a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people," and yet no man was ever so much intent on establishing permanent and pastoral relations and precise presbyterial connections. He wrote well, with a vigorous pen, and began well in using the press for instruction to the young and the ignorant. His first production was a catechism, and his second a defence of that catechism against George Keith, a man of vast notoriety as an apostate Quaker and renegade Episcopalian. This made McKemie famous at Boston as an author, and won for him the admiration of Increase and Cotton Mather. He was a Christian gentleman, withal, of the most cultivated manners, and an orator of graceful power and fascinating address. He always captivated the rulers of Maryland and Virginia in his applications to them for the liberty of preaching, and he never failed to win his way with these accomplishments until he came to New York and dined with Edward Hyde, the viscount Cornbury, a full cousin of Queen Anne,

and grandson of Clarendon, the historian of calumny.

Cornbury had come as governor of the colony in 1702. Nine years before this unfortunate event a statute had passed through the assembly and council by "an artifice," according to the boast of its author subsequently made, the whole assembly being dissenters except the speaker himself. By this act the territory was to be divided into parishes for "one good and sufficient minister" in each, to be supported by taxes levied on all the people. Most of the people being Dutch, and honestly believing that one "good and sufficient minister" might be Reformed or Independent just as well as Episcopalian, and the people in every parish being authorized to assess their own taxes and choose their own pastors, no ruler, governor or judge dared to unveil the trick, and it remained a dead letter until Cornbury came with "instructions," as he alleged, from the court or council of the queen. These instructions were, in substance, that the "Act of Toleration," William and Mary, 1689, should not be extended to the province of New York without the express permission of the governor. High-church partisans, we know, carried everything in the court of Queen Anne. "The Venerable Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts" was instituted in 1701 under such auspices, with

ample funds and powerful patrons, political as well as religious. George Keith, Colonel Morris and Lord Cornbury were now factors on this side of the Atlantic to nullify the act of toleration, establish the hierarchy of England in America, and restore the intolerance which had been overthrown by the revolution at home. Simultaneous with Cornbury's arrival was the effort of Morris to persuade the colonial assembly of New Jersey to give up their government to the Crown and enact the same "artifice" for the Church as in New York—a measure defeated by only two votes, one of a Quaker and the other of a Baptist, and yet virtually accomplished for thirty-six years by the proprietaries themselves when they surrendered to the Crown their possessions in New Jersey as a burden more than a profit. Even William Penn was startled at this turn of spiritual despotism when he found Lord Cornbury looking after Philadelphia, and the vestrymen of the city actually intriguing for an extension of the viscount's authority over them. A storm from the pen of that mild philanthropist effectually stopped the business in Pennsylvania, when he wrote to the lords of trade and plantations demanding that they should either buy him out or let him buy out "the hot Church party," as he called it.

At this time it was that McKemie and Hamp-

ton came along on their way to Boston in quest of more ministers. Their fame had preceded them at New York. The governor himself sought their acquaintance. But with all his politeness and pretension, they would not ask him for leave to preach, and he was enraged. The Dutch and French churches both refused the pulpit to McKemie through fear of the tyrant, who had openly declared that the "one good and sufficient minister," in the act of 1693, must be construed as one episcopally ordained according to the Church of England, so that no other English preaching at least should be had in New York without his consent; and even Dutch and French preaching was made to feel that it was free by sufferance and shielded by its foreign tongues, rather than by prescription or treaty or law. But still the Scotch-Irish Presbyterian would preach in New York, and that without the governor's leave; and accordingly, in a private house on Pearl street, that of William Jackson, a shoemaker, the first Presbyterian sermon was preached to as many as would hear him, with doors and windows open, on the text Psalm l. 23: "To him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God." An infant child also was baptized in that service. The same day Hampton preached at Newtown, Long Island.

Early in the week they were both arrested and brought before the angry and bigoted official. With the utmost dignity and manliness McKemie demanded to know by what law the arrest was made. Cornbury said his "instructions" were the law, and they would not suffer him to allow "strolling preachers to spread their pernicious doctrines." McKemie replied that his Confession of Faith was known to the world, that his doctrines were sound, the same as the articles of the Church that denied him the right to preach them, and challenged examination, saying that they had been already approved by the authorities of Virginia and Maryland, and at Barbadoes also, where he had been qualified according to the act of toleration. At this the persecutor exclaimed that no law of the kind belonged to the colonies, and no permission, at any rate from another province, would avail under his government, and he would know nothing but his own instructions from Her Majesty's council. McKemie denied that his instructions were law, and again demanded a sight of the statute under which he was arrested. "You, sir, know law!" said Cornbury, with a sneer, and ordered him to prison.

Everything technical in the form of commitment was violated. Repeated experiments to correct the blundering were made, and each blunder of the writ had to be paid for by the prisoners,

whilst they were kept all the while in jail. It seemed impossible to obtain either liberty or trial. After two month's imprisonment he was released on bail, and immediately went back to attend a meeting of presbytery in Philadelphia, thence resuming his missionary work, without forgetting his recognizance at New York.

At length a true bill was found against McKemie, Hampton being released. When the trial came on, the accused was defended by counsel and by himself. Tradition lauds the eloquence and power of his argument. The prosecution was overwhelmed with defeat and shame before judge and jury, and he was unanimously acquitted. Yet the cost to him of that persecuting false imprisonment and the trial was enormous, designed to make him still a prisoner for the debt. And he narrowly escaped a second arrest and the jail because he refused to promise that he would not preach again in New York, and actually did preach in the French church.

Within a year after this outrage on the Presbyterians, Lord Cornbury was superseded in office —not for his bigoted intolerance, however, but for his profligacy and corruption, a dishonored bankrupt and a disgrace alike to Church and State. And yet even in his downfall he raved against McKemie, and attempted to justify the atrocious

wrong of that persecution before the lords of trade and plantations with the following description of our venerated founder, which, in softer phrase, might be considered apostolic fitness for his work in America: "He is jack-of-all-trades: he is a preacher, a doctor of physic, a merchant, an attorney, a counselor-at-law, and, which is worst of all, a disturber of governments." The same year, 1708, McKemie died.

The agitation of this affair and other iniquitous proceedings, like the wrong done to Jamaica in robbing her by fraud and violence of both church and glebe—the most valuable church property on Long Island—and compelling her people to wait through almost thirty years of expensive litigation to recover it from the Episcopalians, at length disgusted governors and judges even belonging to that sect.* A feud also had been occasioned between clergy and laity by the greed and ambition of Vesey, the first rector of Trinity church. He had been born and bred a Puritan, and had been sent by Increase Mather to look after the Congregationalists about New York. But Governor Fletcher, another of the most corrupt men of his age, offered him the rectorship and sent him to England for "orders," although he was ultimately installed by two ministers of the Reformed Dutch Church. He was entirely bought over, and at

* Dr. Macdonald's *History Jamaica Church.*

once became even more than "conformed." His eye was taken with a small farm called the "King's Bowerie," and he determined to grasp the fee simple for Trinity. The Episcopalian people desired only a lease, being opposed to mortmain not only, but to the schemes of Vesey in general, having little confidence in his integrity or sanctity. But he triumphed over the best and ablest laymen of his church, and secured in temporalty for the support and propagation of prelacy the largest inheritance of any particular church in America.

In the confusion of this quarrel the handful of pious men who had continued their distinct meetings for prayer on the Lord's day, after the visit of McKemie, were encouraged to attempt the formation of a Presbyterian church in the city of New York. Some of the most prominent citizens belonged to this band, and were soon associated with numbers increasing from year to year. They determined to have a pastor in 1716, and called James Anderson from Delaware, a Scotchman ordained nine years before by the presbytery of Irvine for American missions—"a graceful orator, a popular preacher and a worthy man." In three years a church was built, and even the legislature of Connecticut ordered a collection throughout that colony to aid the enterprise. In 1720 the congregation

petitioned the governor and council for a charter of incorporation. But the opposition of Trinity church, actually appearing by counsel, defeated them, and the title to their property had to be vested in Anderson himself and three members of the church and by them transferred to ministers of Edinburgh in 1730. For more than half a century the First Presbyterian church of New York city could not obtain the right of a citizen to sue and be sued in the courts of the country, owing to the hostile power and overshadowing wealth of Trinity church. And this injustice greatly damaged there the feeble inception of our cause. It compelled the pastor to meddle too much with the temporal concerns of the church and brought dissension into the bosom of his flock. A division ensued and a second congregation was made, and Jonathan Edwards, at the age of nineteen, was called to the new organization. But Anderson resigned his charge, and Edwards left with much regret for want of competent support. Both congregations were soon happily reunited in the ministry of Ebenezer Pemberton, son of a Boston pastor, and a graduate of Harvard, who prospered for thirty years in that conspicuous charge, and left it a flock of nearly fourteen hundred souls.

Thus the peculiar and extreme dispersion to which Presbyterians were doomed at the early

colonization of this country was followed with legal and illegal intolerance precisely at the period of the first formation. No wonder it was so in the cradle of that day, when the old convening propensity toward presbyteries and synods, which had troubled the prelacy of England so much for a century and a half, began to show itself on this continent, like a handwriting on the wall, to signify that spiritual despotism was finished, that the union of Church and State would be impossible, that between the bondage of hierarchical tyranny on one side and the anarchy of advisory councils on the other a strong republic not of this world would arise, well compacted, like a stone cut out without hands, to become a great mountain, filling the land and remaining "an eternal excellency, the joy of many generations."

It was in "the Augustan age of England" that our infant Church was hindered and oppressed from New York to Charleston, with disabilities thrown upon her even in Maryland, where Episcopalians revoked what Roman Catholics had given of religious liberty.

East of New York, and over almost the whole extent of Puritan independency, there was a civil establishment which made parishes identical with townships, and taxed the inhabitants by statute for the support of the Church as well as the road,

the prison and the poorhouse. When Presbyterian emigrants came, therefore, to attempt the distinct organization of their churches in New England, it was found that a constraint and burden beset them but little different from the oppression of the old countries, where dissent was liable to the tithing of installed religion as well as the voluntary offering of stipend for its own ministry and ordinances. They were not only too poor but too conscientious to support with their substance a discipline of the Church that was radically different from their own representative system. And there was jealousy, harsh and bitter at times, on the part of ministers and people among those theocratic townships. When a few Presbyterians attempted to settle at Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1718, with their pastor Fitzgerald, they were violently hindered by a mob from building a house of worship, and that mob, it is said, was headed by some "considerable persons" of the town; and this intolerance continued for twenty years in the way of taxing Presbyterians for the support of the first Congregational church of that town, until most of them removed to the western frontier of New York.

A whole presbytery, called by tradition the Irish Presbytery, and calling themselves the Presbytery of Boston, consisting of ten ministers

at least besides Lemercier of the French church in that city, became so quietly and completely pressed down and out by the policy of New England in the first part of the last century that history can hardly find the date either of its origin or its extinction.* Exceptional places like Londonderry and Rutland, where some division of the township by courts of law or acts of the colonial assembly afforded relief, were very few during the whole period of Presbyterian settlement.

Indeed, there was but one strip of country in all our broad land where presbytery could stretch itself without molestation from the jealousy of spiritual powers, and that was the border of a savage wilderness. It happened, in the goodness of God, that most of this border was the Jezreel of America, rich and beautiful through its whole extent of Cumberland Valley in Pennsylvania and Shenandoah in Virginia, and yet the bloodiest battle-ground we have ever had since the beginning of our American civilization. There the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians were suffered to pour the streams of immigration and set up their tabernacle without a challenge, because there they had to stand guardsmen for the nation through nearly the whole of a century. The cabins there might worship as they pleased.

* Colman's MSS., Massachusetts Historical Society's collection.

A cordon of blood and fire might build its own altars and have the war-whoop of the Indian for a diapason through its own cathedrals. The apathetic peace of Quaker authorities in Pennsylvania and the chevalier pride of Episcopal authorities in Virginia united in giving countenance to Presbyterians all along the North Mountain, while the trail of the savage and smoke of his wigwam, the deadly rifle and ruthless tomahawk, made it undesirable to have the "one good and sufficient minister" in every parish ordained episcopally and supported by "a tax on all the inhabitants" of poor and perilous frontier stockades.

But there presbytery flourished. There a pure gospel was preached by such men as Craighead and Thompson and Steele and Elder with a pocket-Bible in one hand and a loaded rifle in the other. There and then, as always in critical or eventful times, heroes grew on the bench of ruling elders. There Chambers, at the peril of his life and fortune, gathered a whole community into his own fort, and when other populations fled the valley, stood with indomitable courage at the outposts of civilization in his town, and almost alone rolled back the rush of savage inhumanity.* And there it was that Armstrong, a ruling elder in Carlisle, drew to him Hugh

* *Irish and Scotch Early Settlers, etc.*, by George Chambers.

Mercer, a young physician from Scotland, and projected that intrepid action at Kittanning which delivered the valley from savage incursion, and stands in history, as it did in the opinion of Washington, the most valorous and timely discomfiture of the foe ever achieved in warfare with the Indians. Armstrong lived to become the intimate friend of Washington, by whose influence he was made a general of the Revolution and a member of the old Congress. And his son it was who carried Mercer in his arms from the battle-ground of Princeton, became a senator in Congress, ambassador to France and secretary of war in the administration of Madison.

It will now be admitted that, in view of all the disadvantages of our beginning and opposition to our first progress, there must be rare dynamic virtue in the creed which could gather people so dispersed, and organize quickly and well a body like the Presbyterian Church, that has always grown consolidated in proportion as it has grown vast. In 1707 it had eight ministers and twelve churches. In 1717 it had more than double this number both of ministers and churches; and the perfect harmony with which it went into a synod that year and agreed upon the subordination of three presbyteries into which it was resolved, and drew to this plural a fourth in Long Island which had been Independent more than Presbyterian

ten years before, shows a primal force in some great principles underlying our whole conception of the Church. No one can doubt, with our primitive records before him, that the first ecclesiastical movement which we relate this day was due to intelligent ideas that had been maturing for centuries, and began to work on this hemisphere anew, and yet normal as if they had begun again at the suburbs of Geneva or colleges of Edinburgh; and just as little can we doubt that the assimilation of new material from Holland, France, Germany, Wales and Sweden, as well as New England, was more and more complete as our system extended its fold. It was better Presbyterianism in 1717 than in 1707; better still in 1729, when "the adopting act" was voted and the numbers had grown to nearly double of what they were at the formation of the synod; better in 1741, when the rupture of ministerial communion made each wing of the separation vie with the other in devotion to the adopted standards of the whole; and better yet when the schism was healed in 1758 with a reunion which made it impossible that the Church could ever split again for the same causes of division.

This great catholic tendency, which is the main characteristic of the Presbyterian system when it is fairly understood, arises from a few elementary principles that were all at work in the first plant-

ing, and for almost half a century before an express formulation by the act of 1729, which approved of Presbyterian church government as well as adopted the Confession of Faith and the catechism. Indeed, these principles originated the Reformation in Scotland itself, and were covenanted in the body of her discipline again and again before the Westminster Assembly could gather and build with them a directory in their Confession of Faith. These are chiefly the following:

1. The Church, in its visible form, is a company of parents and children which answers to the divine purpose in Christ before the world began, to prepare a "fullness" for him through all remaining time that will represent him on earth while he represents it in heaven.

2. This representative body is made such by the constant communication of gifts and graces from himself through the agency of the Holy Spirit.

3. These gifts and graces are diversified to an indefinite extent, no two members on earth being perfectly alike in this endowment.

4. Consequently, the larger this body is made, which the Holy Ghost inhabits, the more complete the diversity reflected, and therefore the more fully is this image of Christ delineated among men.

5. Officers commensurate with the need of this body through every age are all given of God with warrant in his word, the ascension gifts of a glorious Master, and all of them representatives emphatically and in a triple sense, representing him to the Church and the Church to him, and both him and the Church to the whole world.

6. These officers, besides the function of each individual according to his order, hold jurisdiction by assemblies, only in the name of Christ, for the exercise of any power bestowed upon the Church.

7. Assemblies, through all their varieties and gradations, are to be compacted together, always converging in some higher unity which is one of ultimate appeal and general authority.

8. This ultimate and highest tribunal, by whatever name it may be called, is the primary court, being next and nearest the Head in the scope of its aims and representation of all the churches, so that if there be power in the Church anywhere lodged which has not been specifically distributed by a formal constitution, this high court is the depository of such power, to meet the exigences that cannot be foreseen or provided for by any written constitution.

9. Election of officers must be in the people of each particular church, who are free to choose

among the candidates approved of God and imbued with his Spirit, suffrage always abiding where the Holy Ghost abides, the great commission of the ministry really resting on the bosom of the whole Church, and no one succession of individual men, who are all given to the Church only to serve her, the transmission of office by those already invested being always a relative and not absolute necessity, qualified by the greater necessity of ability and faithfulness.

These are the principles which had shaped the Presbyterian Church in every land and among English-speaking people just as long before "the adopting act" of America as our Centennial of civil independence has been coming since that adoption. In Scotland a General Assembly existed before either synods or presbyteries were formed, as a council of apostles, elders and brethren was held in Jerusalem before any intermediate judicature had been formed, for the reference of causes from particular churches. Our presbytery at Freehold or Philadelphia one hundred and seventy years ago was the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America. It was a "representation of all the particular churches in this denomination;" it was "the bond of union, peace and mutual confidence" at home and the organ of "correspondence" with churches abroad. It "issued all references and appeals"

and exercised all the authority of review over courts of record below it; and beyond this, it often did the session's work in particular churches, and exercised the right of "eminent domain" in bringing its authority to bear on evils and disorders which it was wise to redress before any record could be made below or any complaint and appeal could have time to go up above. In ten years more that General Assembly was called a synod, and this body exercised in turn all the prerogatives now invested in our supreme judicatory by the constitution; and more than this, it often did the work of presbyteries, erecting or dividing particular churches, ordaining, translating and judging ministers, adopting standards—the Westminster Confession of Faith and Directory in 1729, just as the General Assembly of Scotland had done in 1645—without sending down overtures to the presbyteries on the subject. This privilege was a grant, subsequently made, in the way of distribution, vesting rights below which are, of course, irrevocable, from the reservoir of power inherent in that supreme assembly which most fully represents Christ himself and all the particular churches of this denomination, as it was at the close of the seventeenth century in the "Barrier Act" by the General Assembly of Scotland.

We may now see that two republican structures

grew up together on this continent during the eighteenth century, the converse of each other, but all the more concordant and helpful to each other on this account—Church republicanism and State republicanism. Very much alike in being both the ordinance of God, and both constructed largely by Presbyterian hands, and both containing the democratic element in large proportion, yet they differ essentially in the order and place they gave to real democracy. The Church begins in heaven; the State begins on earth. The Church begins with unity; the State with multiplicity. The Church is founded on one divine "Rock;" the State is founded on many minute constituencies of men. The Church secures her safety and the liberty of her people by the exercise of power in but one branch of it, committed to men, the judicial, and that modified by the equities of paternal discretion; the State secures her safety and the liberty of her people by the co-ordinate exercise of power in three branches, legislative, judicial, and executive, with as little of the paternal as possible. The Church is complete only in the representation of all the gifts and graces emanating from her Head and flowing down to the skirts of priesthood in her people of every name and place and age, making it impossible for any true Presbyterian to be a bigot and out of co-operative union with a single

feature of Jesus wherever it is seen; the State may be complete in but one fragment of an empire, an island as well as a continent, a revolted province or colony as well as a subjugated kingdom annexed; so that it is impossible for a true citizen to be cosmopolitan, as a true Christian is catholic, or to travel from one country to another, without being an alien. Insubordination is death to the State, rebellion being "as the sin of witchcraft;" but the resistance even of conscience to behests of the Church may weaken her energies and disturb her peace, but cannot touch her life, which is "hid with Christ in God." These two systems were never so thoroughly compared and sharply contrasted, and yet inseparably held, as they were by our fathers in the forming period of our Church, between 1706 and 1789.

Simultaneous with this movement of two structures was the movement of two currents within the province of ecclesiastical formation. One was from the North and the other from the South, and they met at Philadelphia. The Northern current issued from a theocracy in New England, which was then at the best of its experiment, having blended with a civil administration the government and discipline of the Church and rivaled the beautiful theocracy of Calvin at Geneva in the century before; and like that Helvetian model, it was transient as beautiful,

leaving the Church it had cherished to weakness for schism and Socinianism, and the State it had sanctified to laughter, through all coming generations, at the "blue" regulations which governed forefather times. The current from the South was all Scotch-Irish, with a little Welsh in its element, made up of rivulets which owed alike their dispersion and confluence in the wilderness to bitter intolerance of Church and State united in the Old World, and was now swelling to a volume which would henceforth dash every scheme that would establish religion by law and divest the Church of government or discipline prescribed by her own Lord alone. There was some ridging and foaming when these currents met to form that river which has made glad the city of our God, although the Southern current, like the Gulf Stream in the Atlantic, prevailed with its direction, and made the Independent Presbyterian Andrews, of Philadelphia, who had written to Dr. Colman, of Boston, about the overture of John Thompson for subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith, offered first in 1727 and pressed to the vote in 1729, that he "had been in hopes they would hear no more of it," and Dickinson, of Elizabeth, who had published, in strictures upon it, that such a subscription would be like the wall about Laish —nothing of protection, but a snare—were soon

more than contented, both of them. And all the others of that stream—Pemberton, Pierson, Morgan, Elmer, Webb and Pumry, with the churches of East Jersey and Long Island—yielded and owned with glad reminiscence that it proved to be all the benefit its authors had promised. And no wonder they were so easily satisfied with Westminster at that time, when the Northern current bore on its bosom Cambridge and Saybrook platforms going to pieces—synods and ruling elders in rafts which could be floated on only by the stronger withs of Presbyterian organization.

Instead of checking the influx of Puritan ministers and people, the formal adoption of our standards increased the number, until, within one generation, from being as one to seven, it became almost one to three, in the proportion of ministers. Instead of depressing the energy and influence of New England men to acquiesce reluctantly in the subscription which Irish and Scotch members, in their strong majority, had imposed, they became honored guides of the Presbyterian Church through the stormy and eventful midst of the last century. It might even be called the Dickinson age of our Church. Scotch and Irish ministers never dominated as a party in their successful structure of our system. The leading authors were from New England, with the ex-

ception of Gilbert Tennent, whose book and pamphlets issued from the press, it was said, "as bees from a hive." Not to speak of Edwards in this connection, Jonathan and Moses Dickinson and Joseph Morgan, of Freehold, were prolific authors; and the first of these three had no superior in handling the press of that day for the service of that generation and the generations following.

But scarcely had the fabric of this fair construction been completed with so much harmony of council and adornment of ability and learning, piety and zeal, when it was subject to a strain which has no parallel in history. Lest it should be exalted above measure by the consciousness of strength in its unity and orthodoxy and force of discipline, it was humbled and almost ruined by the agitations of that "great awakening" which was so worldwide in the days of Whitfield and Wesley, Davenport, Edwards, Dickinson and the Tennents. Perhaps the temper of its organization was too rigid for such a time, and the attitude of fencing against the laxity which was coming in from abroad had induced a reserve and suspicion that were excessive in the body of our old synod. Probably also many of its best ministers and people were too indiscriminate in challenging a revival of religion which had so much of tumult and dis-

order in its manifestations, radicalism in its pretensions and fanatical bitterness in its judgments. Certainly, also, there was much declension of practical goldliness, considering the recent high and perfectly harmonious attainment of the Presbyterian Church in purity of doctrine and simplicity of order and worship. But these were faults which only "the meekness and gentleness of Christ" in the unction of his ministers could deal with. The wrath of man, however, unhappily attempted to work the righteousness of God when Samuel Blair and Gilbert Tennent undertook to convert the Church instead of the world with their burning zeal and wonderful abilities.

They began with acrimonious invective. Irritated by the strictures of slow but sober-minded brethren on the enthusiasm of Whitfield and his co-workers, the most ardent of whom was Gilbert Tennent—their pretensions to know precisely who were converted among the people and who were unconverted among the ministers, and their encouragement of strange disorder in the meetings for worship, the hideous outcries, bodily agitations and convulsive fits of "the falling work," alike in the camp-meeting and the church—Tennent and Blair, at the open synod, charged their fellow-members in formal "presentation" papers, read before a crowd of promiscuous followers, with unregeneracy of heart, heresy

of doctrine (for allowing our own happiness to be a motive at all in obedience to God), pharisaic hypocrisy and dead formality in their ministrations. In the same year Gilbert Tennent preached at Nottingham a sermon on "the dangers of an unconverted ministry," which was filled with the most malign denunciation of evangelical men that fanaticism could express in our language—a sermon published twice at Philadelphia and once at Boston, and scattered like the leaves of November among the churches. In this "Nottingham sermon" the people were advised to judge their ministers and assured that they were capable of discerning the unconverted among their shepherds, and that it was their duty to forsake the ministry of such and quit hearing any man whose preaching did not profit their souls according to their own judgment and taste. Along with this incendiary libel sown broadcast through the land were actual intrusions into the churches of such men as Alison and Boyd, Gillespie and Thomson, not one church in the whole presbytery of Donegal escaping rupture; divisions made and gloried in, despite the solemn and repeated warning of synod. Added to all was open disobedience to the order of the synod that a liberal education should be required of candidates for the ministry—either a diploma from some approved college or an examination sus-

tained by the synod—before any presbytery could be allowed to take the candidate on trials for license and ordination. The presbytery of New Brunswick was no sooner created in 1738 than it began to protest against this order, and actually proceeded to license John Rowland, with total disregard of the injunction. The synod, having a right to judge of the proper qualification of its own members, refused to acknowledge license and ordination so irregularly made, and refused a seat to any one so introduced. The dispute occasioned by this anarchy involved other points of deviation, at which "the Brunswick party" began to swerve with radical jarring. The value of all external calling to the ministry was questioned, the enthusiasm of an inward call was held to be sufficient, and the power of a synod to govern a presbytery with anything stronger than mere advice was denied. Antinomian tendencies were developed on every hand, and the preaching of duty was denounced; learning and soundness and regularity of life were contemned as inadequate vouchers for minister or member unless he could tell exactly when and how he was converted, and retain the assurance of this reality as distinctly in his knowledge as he could "a thought of his mind or a stab in his flesh."

It was well for the Church that the life of this party was the family of the Tennents. They had

a school which was very good, but very poor—a log college—with their father at the head of it, the best of teachers in the last century, but extremely straitened in his means and immeasurably scant of the resources and appointments which belonged to the colleges of New England. Unfortunately, the requirement of a diploma or an examination by the synod itself, in order to be taken on trials for licensure, seemed to overlook too much the great service of that Neshaminy schooling, and mentioned only the chartered colleges of this and other lands. The senior William Tennent, master of the log college and father of four illustrious ministers—Gilbert, William, John and Charles—had come from Ireland ordained a priest of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and had renounced Episcopacy in coming here mainly because of objections to the use of liturgical forms in worship. He had little or no sympathy with the tumult of the time, except as he lived in his sons and pupils, and burned because they were offended with the imaginary slight of Neshaminy by the synod. John, the third son, had finished his course at Freehold, N.J., before he was twenty-five years old, in 1732, and in a ministry of scarcely two full years had gathered a harvest for his Lord in that "poor distracted Scottish church" where he saw the first fruits of the great revival which was so soon

to overspread the continent. His brother William succeeded him in that charge with similar success, and a very peculiar fame for the supernatural in the course of his life. Charles was the youngest of these brothers, and settled in the presbytery of New Castle, where his influence reinforced the New Brunswick party beyond the limits of that "protesting" presbytery.

But the strong man of this great family was Gilbert, the eldest son, fourteen years old when he came to this country, taught everything by his father, whom he also assisted in the log college, and the first Presbyterian minister whose whole education for the office had been received in America. When George Whitfield arrived at Philadelphia in 1739, he hastened to Neshaminy to imbibe the lessons of that school and the spirit of the prophets there. Gilbert Tennent was the man of all others whom he most admired as a preacher and as a guide in adapting his own resplendent ministry to the character of the churches and the conversion of the American people. To him he was indebted also for most of the mistakes, antipathies and illusions which marred his career in this land. The fame of Whitfield, however, became that of the Tennents also in consequence of this intimacy and companionship, giving immense advantage with the people to any side of a contest on which Gilbert

was engaged. The censoriousness, the intrusions, the distraction of parishes, pretensions to judge the hearts of men, the defiance of synodical authority,—all these and other fanatical excesses were so glorious for a while, in the company of Whitfield and the Tennents, that reflecting men who had rejoiced in the revival at first beheld with consternation the true glory of their infant Church departing. Discouraged, disorganized, left by the multitude and having no longer the "many" to sustain them in forms of judicial process, they determined to meet the extremity with a measure that corresponded with its lawlessness.

At the synod of 1741, Robert Cross, the successor of Andrews in Philadelphia, offered a "protest" against the "protesters" or Brunswick party, which enumerated with great precision and power the many evils which that party had brought upon the Church and which threatened her destruction, proposing to renounce all further connection with those brethren until they would confess and abjure the errors of their way. It was placed on the table for signatures, and a scene of the utmost confusion followed. It is said the moderator left his chair, and the galleries, crowded with excited people, who generally sympathized with the new side, turned the confusion into uproar. Each side claimed to be the synod,

and with much difficulty order was restored enough to count the signatures to this protest and the numbers opposed. It appeared that the former, called henceforth the Old Side, had the majority, and the latter, called the New Side, withdrew. Thus the schism of the last century began; and we must mark the finger of God for good even in this little thing—that the act of separation was a muss and not a vote. Half a generation might heal the one, a whole generation it would take to heal the other. As it was well ordered that the whole combination of the disturbing party hung upon the character and will of Gilbert Tennent, so it was well ordered that the protest which meant to revolutionize the Church with an overture rather than to conserve her with the process of her own discipline should be in no proper technical sense an act of the constituted synod.

Providentially, also, the whole presbytery of New York was absent from that meeting of the synod. Next year, 1742, it appeared, and Jonathan Dickinson, one of its members, became the moderator. He at once proposed that the separated brethren of the previous year should be restored to their seats—not because he thought they were blameless, for he condemned their excesses; not because they had become either penitent or apologetic, for they were going on to

license others without regard to the authority of the synod, and to rend the churches in every direction and beyond all bounds with active intrusion and malign aspersion of the pastors; but because the whole transaction of 1741 had been irregular and unconstitutional. The excluded brethren ought to have been arraigned by their presbyteries or by the synod itself with process of discipline, and ejected only with a full and faultless record. But he failed. The majority objected with keen force that absentees of the preceding year should not assume the position of judges and seek to reverse what might have been better done if they had been present. Trial according to forms of process in the Directory was impossible when the offenders were leading the multitude and insisting to the last count that they were the synod themselves. And even a reconsideration of the act could not be moved when it had never been voted, and was now a rupture in fact without a record in order. There was no remedy but return of the excluded party to a better mind. Thus the schism was continued.

For three years the Dickinson proposal was pressed on the synod, and conferences were held, with alternate overtures to the synod and to the excluded members. The latter had been brought by Aaron Burr and others to the point of con-

fessing with regret nearly all the charges of irregularity and wrong, demanding in return that the protest of Cross should be withdrawn from the files and records of the synod. But this was refused for the simple reason that all its allegations were true, and truer every year. At length (1745) the presbytery of New York formed itself into a synod and took upon its own roll the exscinded presbytery of New Brunswick and all others in their following. This was done with little or no heat of resentment or antagonism in any particular, but the technical point of restoring to visible unity with the Presbyterian Church a body of men who were mad with enthusiasm, but sound in the faith and pre-eminently gifted for the service of Christ. It was expressly and thoroughly understood in this formation that the New York synod, as it was now called, was one with the synod of Philadelphia; not only in an honest adherence to the Westminster standards, but also in every particular of decency and order which had been specified in the dividing protest of 1741. Its attitude from the beginning was that of reunion; and if it had only repressed with a firm hand "the intrusions" with which the Brunswick party continued to agitate and divide the churches adhering to "the Old Side," there would not have been three instead of thirteen years more of separation. Here was the

standing cause of discord, making every year an ultimate reconstruction of parishes and presbyteries in case of reunion more impracticable. The swelling tide of prosperity which favored the synod of New York, and the halo of brilliant men and sainted evangelists which adorned her ministry at the time, hid from the world the sin of this obliquity, and left many a precious light in the territory of the old synod to be quenched by reason of distraction.

The glory of our old synod of Philadelphia through all these times of excitement and convulsion was the "ornament" of her "meek and quiet spirit." When Gilbert Tennent and Samuel Blair insulted her to the face at the first with charges of unregeneracy, unfaithfulness and opposition to the Spirit of God, she adopted unanimously and sent forth to the churches, as well as enjoined on her ministers, the pastoral minute requiring them to take heed to themselves and search and see whether these things were so. When John Thompson, her great conservative and defender by the press, took up the task of her vindication in his imperishable book on church government, he did it with lowliness of spirit, modesty and candor and consistency, throughout, which were in singular contrast with the haughty contempt of the "Nottingham" sermon and its volleys of subsequent defence.

So it was through all the ensuing conferences had between the synods until the reunion came about in 1758. Though her desolated and fragmentary churches could not be restored by any organic union, and though her great protest of 1741 must be affirmed at every conference as the truth of history and the moderation of justice to the character of both parties, she was willing to meet the chronic demand for its withdrawal by a phrase which yielded no principle, but kept the fact for all future generations in a state of negative solution. It was that the protest of 1741 "was not the act of the synod." On this phrase the two bodies agreed, and the main dispute was over.

Another cause of reunion was the complete humiliation of Gilbert Tennent. That "son of thunder" had discomfited himself, and the strong staff of the disturbing party was broken. He was the father of controversy in the American Presbyterian Church. Not by any false doctrine avowed nor by any scandal coming on his life nor by any paralysis of intellect and power of speech nor by loss of zeal for the cause of Christ in the salvation of souls, but by the extreme severity of his temper in religious controversy, he fell from leadership in this Church. It awakened suspicion of error when he was seen to be tossed continually to the verge on this side and

that of the vast area he trod in disputation. It arrayed against him the fears of all considerate men, whether timid or courageous; and the man who excites our fears never could govern Presbyterians. And, above all, it confounded himself with a maze of inconsistencies from which there could be no recovery. He had voted in the synod to approve of the admirable paper on the controversy between him and David Cowell respecting the foundation of moral obligation, and yet soon afterward flung that paper back upon the synod as heretical, in permitting our own happiness in any sense to mingle with the glory of God in motives of obedience. He had assailed Count Zinzendorf and the Moravians with pamphlets as well as speeches of vehement censure, in which every objection was a condemnation of his "Nottingham sermon" and a justification of all that Robert Cross embodied in the memorable "protest of 1741." He had confessed in a letter of penitence to Jonathan Dickinson the great errors of his extravagance enumerated in that protest, and had this letter widely published among the churches at the very time a third edition of the Nottingham sermon was coming from the press in Boston under his own direction. Pamphleteers on both sides of the Atlantic were not slow to blazon "Gilbert *vs.* Tennent;" and so great was the prejudice

against him of good men abroad that the mission of Samuel Davies and himself to Great Britain for the College of New Jersey would have been a failure if he had not humbly retracted the Nottingham sermon in London, although the last conspicuous exploit of his pen just before leaving home was a fresh demand upon the synod of Philadelphia, as a term of reunion, that the protest of 1741, which had complained of that sermon, should be pronounced null and void and virtually untrue. Not in his lifetime and ascendency could there have been a reunion if he had not published his *Irenicum*, confessing his inconsistency and extravagance as he doffed the great coat and leathern girdle in which he had thundered from Delaware to Maine, and consented to retire as an ordinary pastor to the Second church of Philadelphia.

Another cause of reconciliation which mightily constrained the greater to seek reunion with the less at that time was the virtual transference of the log college from Neshaminy to Princeton, whither, some two years before its consummation, Burr and seventy students had removed the College of New Jersey from Newark. The jealousy of all the Tennents had been buried in the grave of their father at the very time this college began with the presidency of Jonathan Dickinson at Elizabeth, and the prosperous academies of

Pennsylvania and Maryland and Delaware, nearly all of them nurtured by the Old Side, came to be coveted and courted as feeders for the College of New Jersey.

But the great cause which secured and hastened a reunion was precisely that "wall" which had surrounded both these bodies all the while of their apparent separation, which Dickinson himself had said, in 1729, would fall "if so much as a fox would go over it"—the Westminster Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms and Directory of Government, Discipline and Worship. This palladium, as well as bulwark around them, rallied all the parties, restrained the factions, gathered the fragments without any loss, and proved once for all to the ages that a full creed is not a dividing wedge, but the very handle of concord, and a witnessing Church that testifies for Christ in her own words to the whole extent of her attainment will never be left "a portion for foxes." It was the centennial time of our old standards, and never had they been hailed with glory and enthusiasm on every side as when history came to make up the results of a world-wide revival.

The reunion was accomplished in 1758, and the name then given to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church was "The Synod of New York and Philadelphia." A few months before

that consummation Jonathan Edwards died; a few months before him his son-in-law, Aaron Burr, had died; Jonathan Dickinson ten years before him. Andrews, Brainerd and Robinson had also departed, three apostolic men and missionaries, one to Philadelphia, another to the Indians and a third to Virginia. So had Samuel Blair, "the incomparable," and John Thomson "the conservative."

What a roll of renowned and sainted men of the interval might be called who had been written on this side and that of the division on earth, and were by that time summoned away to the Church of the first-born that are written in heaven! But a host remained for a new era—the Alisons, the Tennents, the Finleys, the Smiths, Prime, Pemberton, Pierson, Rodgers, Roan, Miller, Spencer, Beatty, Bostwick, Buell, Robert Cross, John Blair, James Brown, George Duffield, and that young man who had charmed with his eloquence the intolerance of the South, and prophesied of Washington at Braddock's defeat, and gathered endowment for Princeton from the opposite hemisphere, and was just now to enter on the presidency of Nassau Hall—Samuel Davies.

One hundred ministers began to assemble in the synod now, and to represent nearly twice that number of nominal churches. Gilbert Tennent was the first moderator, Robert Cross the

second. "Protesters" on both sides of the quarrel and schism were now successors to each other in harmonious line. If Gilbert was first in the honor of presiding over the united body, Robert was first in constructing the platform on which he was elevated. The plan of reunion embodied every plank of principle on which the Old Side had been standing for seventeen years, and every item of additional incorporation would have been at any time assented to if it had been overtured without demanding the formal canceling of their "protest."

It was indeed ordered well that mere "protest" should not be allowed again to disrupt a synod. It was equally well defined that the work of God's own Spirit in the ministrations of truth should not be gainsaid because of paroxysms in the flesh which might incidentally attend it. The existence of a college among us on this side of New England was now conceded as a sufficient reason for the synod to entrust the presbyteries with independent judgment on the qualifications in learning of candidates for the ministry. And the sad disruption of so many churches by the "intrusions" chargeable on the Brunswick party in the day of their heat was accepted as a fact which could not be remedied in reconstruction, beyond enactment that the territorial integrity of parishes should not be

disturbed in that way again. With few exceptions, the Old Side were content with this adjustment, because it was seen upon every hand that good had been brought out of that evil, and in that very thing divine Providence had rebuked the grudging reluctancy with which so many congregations of the Old Side resisted the work of church extension against the tide of ever-swelling populations. In short, the distinctive gains to the New Side in that memorable compact of reunion were all in the direction of the Old Side as well—Westminster endorsed again; order restored; revivals discriminated; majorities vindicated; minorities made free; sound faith and good life accredited as true religion without inquisition after mental states and a prescribed order of experiences. Never was there a more perfect union, never a more noble and frank avowal on both sides, and never a more complete symbol of reconciliation, than the plan of reunion in 1758. Of course it distinguished between essential and non-essential things in the submission of conscience to that bond. But it stipulated for no liberty beyond this; no reduction; no revision; no compliance with expediency. And surely it had no change of the constitution kept in abeyance or in secret on either side, to be sprung upon the whole Church as soon as it could be welded together in the reconstruction.

Thus restored and harmonized again, the Church of our fathers, with a banner streaming at full length in every fold, advanced to another stage of militancy, for which her equipment, that had been gained in the conflicts of principle, and structures of Liberty, civil and religious—twin towers, that she alone had studied how to build distinctly and together—prepared her to act as no other denomination could act in those great events which filled the sequel of a century from her beginning in this land—missions, wars and institutions.

For a whole generation she had to fight the savages on her border almost alone. The proprietaries of Pennsylvania and early governors and councils of this commonwealth strangely allowed the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians in her frontier valley, with very little help in men or money, to bear the brunt of a warfare the most cruel that is recorded in the annals of our country. And yet from the sentries of that exposed and slaughtered community there always went forth the most benignant friends of the poor Indians to enforce the faith of treaties and keep the reservations from intrusion and give them the light and peace of the gospel. When the Quaker government of Pennsylvania outwitted the Delaware Indians, in 1737, with a bargain for as much land "to extend back in the woods" as a man

could walk over in a day and a half, that small but powerful tribe was irritated greatly when the white men secured by advertisement and lavish bounty a pedestrian who could walk as fast as an Indian could run, but they had no remedy. When, again, the Six Nations made their memorable cession at Albany in 1754 to the same authorities of what the latter had been carefully indefinite to describe in metes and bounds which the savages could comprehend, and all middle Pennsylvania was taken as a part of the claim, with a manifest purpose to push it on to the setting sun, the red man was enraged; and Braddock's defeat the year after was but the beginning of horrors which could be stayed only with an honest concession that the summit of the Alleghany Mountain should be the limit of that Albany grant. On the other hand, the border valley of the Presbyterians was no sooner constituted a county, Cumberland, than its authorities enlisted with eager determination to repress all dishonest dealing with the Indians. When a few rash adventurers, mostly Germans, but with some Scotch-Irish, moved into Sherman's valley and other places beyond the Kittochtinny or North Mountain, before the cession of that region at Albany, the Indians complained of the encroachment; and instantly Benjamin Chambers and George Croghan, with other magistrates and a

considerable force of men from the Presbyterian churches, urged by their ministers, crossed the mountain in 1742 and constrained the settlers to quit their clearings, and even burn their cabins in sight of the Indians, that justice might be done and savage resentment avoided.* Such was the uniform spirit of equity toward the Indians on the part of a people whom certain flippant chroniclers describe in this connection as "a pertinacious and pugnacious race," whose trespass on the Indian territory was the main provocation which leagued the Indians with the French in the bloody wars of that age. As they were the sufferers chiefly, they have been falsely accused as the transgressors. The provincial government of Pennsylvania, in its jealousy of Scotch-Irish energy and adventure, its impotency in the hands of cunning knaves who contrived treaties and got for a price the privilege of selling rum to the Indians, has to this day escaped the just condemnation which history finds out in searching for the causes of those horrid calamities that made so much bloody ground on the bosom of this commonwealth.

"The Widows' Fund," the oldest corporation for the relief of desolated families in America, began its benignant work among the necessi-

* See *Irish and Scotch Early Settlers of Pennsylvania*, by Hon. George Chambers, 1856.

tous on the frontier. In 1760 it sent to Great Britain Charles Beatty, who had been the Irish peddler that in attempting to sell his wares to William Tennent of Nishaminy, by praising them in Latin, did it so well that the noble teacher was taken and Beatty himself was taken with the conviction that he ought to stay there and study for the ministry. His success in gathering funds for the corporation was wonderful. Even the General Assembly of Scotland ordered a collection to help his cause throughout the churches. But when he returned home, a dispute arose with Provost Smith, of Philadelphia, respecting the distribution of these funds—whether the disbursement should be a measure of broad philanthropy to comprehend all the distressed who had been driven from their homes by the Indians, or a special distribution to the Presbyterian sufferers whose husbands, brothers or sons had perished in war with the savages. At length it was determined by the synod of 1766, in accordance with a request of the corporation, that he and George Duffield, of Carlisle, should explore the condition of the whole border to learn its necessities, and especially the spiritual condition of the frontier settlements, and also what opportunities might be had for giving the gospel to the Indians. Beatty was full of missionary zeal, having been much

with Brainerd and deeply interested in the Indian school supported long and liberally by the synod. So far as can now be ascertained, he was the first Protestant minister to preach beyond the Alleghanies, when he preached in 1758, at Fort Duquesne, to the troops of Forbes' army that took possession of that post after it was evacuated by the French. And now in this mission of the synod he was the first to preach on the soil of that magnificent State, Ohio, having penetrated the wilderness some hundred and thirty miles and obtained on the Muskingum a knowledge of the Indians to encourage the establishment of permanent missionary enterprise. It is therefore a fact worthy of commemoration that when we say, "Corporations have no soul," this one, the oldest of all among Presbyterians, stands an illustrious exception, the first thing to incite the synod of New York and Philadelphia to move alike in foreign and domestic missions whilst in pursuit of its own distinct and legitimate object, the succor of "poor and distressed" families of Presbyterian ministers.

That same meeting of the synod which sent Beatty and Duffield to reconnoitre settlements on the frontier and open a pathway to the Indian towns beyond was a jubilant meeting, full of gratulation, loyalty and patriotism. It voted an address to His Majesty for the repeal of the

Stamp Act. And these brethren found the whole border full of the same enthusiasm. Every field, every stump, was vocal with the same rejoicing. Indeed, fields and stumps have always been the scenic joy of this denomination.

"The unaccountable humor," as McKemie called it, of the American people to live in the country and cultivate the lands rather than dwell in villages and build up cities, has, in spite of his remonstrance, remained the humor of the Presbyterian people. They have been emphatically from the beginning a rural church. It would seem as if, in this characteristic, the stability of earth itself has been imparted to this ecclesiastical system in making the bulk of her pastors *chorepiscopal* bishops in our assemblies, and making agricultural work the sinew both of money and virtue in defending the institutions of the Church and the liberty of the land. No sign of the times could be more at war with our traditions and ominous of weak degeneracy than the ambition of ministers to quit the country for the city, as if a rural parish were fit only to begin with and a metropolitan pulpit were the goal of aspiration, and the Holy Ghost were in waiting for the work of "translating ministers" rather than keeping them to "make the wilderness and the solitary place glad for them." Perish the policy which, either in education or industry,

would make our youth discontented with a home in the country! When the rage of fanaticism or frivolities of fashion have wasted our churches and emptied our fanes in the town, how often have numbers been replaced by fresh importations from the country of well catechized believers who brought with them revivals of family religion, and thus became "restorers of paths to dwell in"!

We know what kind of soldiers our Presbyterians of the field have sent to every war that has been a war of defence. Before the Declaration of Independence at Philadelphia was written it began to be composed in the fields of the valley and along the mountain tops, from Mecklenburg to Carlisle and from Carlisle to Hannahstown, over the Alleghany Mountains and among the clearings of Westmoreland county. No historical finesse can rob the Presbyterian yeomanry of their credit in having sown with broadcast unanimity the seminal thought, if not phrases also, of that immortal document. It was therefore a philosophical justice in history that the only minister of any denomination who signed it was John Witherspoon, the representative of Presbyterian education and a regular teacher of theology at Princeton half a century before Archibald Alexander was elected to the office. More than a year before he signed it the tidings of

bloodshed at Lexington and Concord started companies from the frontiers of our Church, and mainly from the churches of the Cumberland Valley, to anticipate Washington himself at the siege of Boston, and make the Revolution quick as it was inevitable. Veteran captains were found there quite ready, and numerous almost as ministers and elders, and all of them eager again to muster the host and fire its patriotic ardor.

But "the commencement of the war of the Revolution" is the end of my task, and I desist with filial reverence and affection at a centre of patriotism even on the border of our civilization when that war began.

THE PERIOD FROM THE

WAR OF THE REVOLUTION

TO THE

ADOPTION OF MEASURES FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

1775–1786.

BY THE

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From the War of the Revolution

to the

Organization of the General Assembly.

I.

Condition of the Presbyterian Church at the Opening of this Period (1775).

THE storm of the Revolutionary war broke upon a people more universally peaceable, loyal, intelligent and Christian than any other in the history of the world. With few exceptions the entire population belonged, by voluntary adherence, to some one of the various fractions of the Christian Church.

Speculative atheism there was none; of subtle infidelity hardly a trace; and the coarse and brutal infidelity of Paine and his school was only beginning to make its way amid the lower stratum of society. Nowhere was education more universal; nowhere was the Bible more the book of the home, or the sanctuary dearer to the heart; nowhere were manners simpler, habits more frugal, domestic virtue and official integrity more sacred; nowhere were the minister and the

schoolmaster in higher esteem. Taking the colonies at large, the Church existed in as pure a state as had ever been realized in this her mixed and militant condition.

But she existed in the form of a multitude of sects—all the chief sects, at least, that had already originated in England, with the addition of a few transplanted from the Continent of Europe. Of these only the Congregationalists, the Presbyterians and the Episcopalians have any special significance in relation to the period we are now contemplating. And popularly the first two were regarded as one. The religious element involved in the rebellion was invariably spoken of, whether in or out of New England, as PRESBYTERIAN.*

* See Letter of Rev. Jacob Oel, Episcopal missionary among the Mohawks, to Sir William Johnson:

UIJT MEIN HAUSS
DE 8te AO. 1762.

TO THE HON. SIR WM. JOHNSON:

That ij reit these letter en trouble you bij these ij be forced for it: the reason is because ij heard yesterday in the castle that the Bostoniers were designed to erect schools in everij castle by choosing nijt two jung boijs for to be send in nieu engelland to be instructed there and them should instruct the others in proper learning. now learning is good en is most necessarij amongs the haddens that cannot be contradicted but ij want to know what design as it is to introduce their own Presbijteren church than can it not be allowed en as it prejudice our church en church ceremonies &c.—*Doc. History of New York*, iv. 307.

Mr. Keith writes to the Secretary of the Venerable Society, etc., that "if a minister be not sent with the first conveniency, Presbyterian ministers from New England would swarm into these countries and prevent the increase of the Church."—*Episcop. Histor. Coll.*, 1851, p. xxiii.

The Baptists already existed in considerable numbers, having perhaps three hundred or more congregations. But they were without organization of any kind, without an educated ministry, their preachers being small tradesmen or mechanics and the flocks consisting of the more ignorant and enthusiastic classes in the middle and southern colonies. It is only toward the close of this period and in connection with the struggle for religious liberty in Virginia that they make any considerable figure.*

The Methodists in England and America still made a part of the Anglican Church, and throughout the Revolutionary period acted in sympathy with it. Mr. Whitfield, in writing from America to the bishop of Oxford and others, though commenting in very severe terms on the character of the Episcopal clergy in the colonies, yet invariably describes them as belonging to "our Church." During the war for independence they are in no way to be distinguished from other Episcopalians. In England, John Wesley at first employed his pen in defence of the measures of Parliament, and reproduced as his own, without acknowledgment, the arguments of Samuel Johnson's *Taxation no Tyranny*.† He afterward changed his views,

* See *History of the Baptist Interests in the United States*, by Rev. Rufus Babcock, D.D., Poughkeepsie, N. Y., in *Quart. Register* for 1841.

† Wesley's *Calm Address to the American Colonies*. The offensive

and in a letter to Lord North remonstrated against the war, declaring that "in spite of all his long-rooted prejudices as a churchman and a loyalist, he cannot avoid thinking, if he think at all, that the colonists are an oppressed people asking nothing more than their legal rights." He adds that it is idle to think of conquering America: "Twenty thousand British troops could not do it."

The Roman Catholics were still few in number and appear during this period in no ecclesiastical capacity. In 1775 they had no more than fifty congregations in the colonies, and half that number of clergy. Even in Maryland they constituted not more than one-twentieth part of the population.

Quakerism had been introduced into America early in the century, and had caught with great rapidity. The lofty pretensions and bold "testifyings" of the early preachers, and the punishment they brought upon themselves by their excesses, recommended their views to the loose religious radicalism which hung on the skirts of the New England churches. They throve for a while on "persecution." In the middle colonies the high character of the grantee of Pennsyl-

sentiments of this address, and its broad and subsequently confessed plagiarisms, exposed the author to very severe criticism. See Dr. Toplady's *Old Fox tarred and feathered, occasioned by what is called Mr. John Wesley's Calm Address to our American colonies.*—Toplady's *Works*, v. 441.

vania, not yet defaced by the sharp pens of later critics, and the pacific character and benevolent aims of his administration, attracted numerous adherents. Quakers swarmed on both sides the Delaware—disputatious, high-flying, theological Quakers, non-combatant as respects carnal weapons, but ever ready for dialectical brawl and battle. They were already broken up by schisms. George Keith, a busy, stirring, hot-headed brother, who subsequently conformed to the Anglican Church and became an ultra-zealous Episcopal missionary in the colonies, had a considerable following called Keithian or Christian Quakers. On the other hand, the Foxonian or Deistical Quakers, who are described by Messrs. Keith and Talbot as "no better than heathens," were passionately enthusiastic for the "inner light" and against the authority of divine revelation. The two factions were destroying each other; and it is worth noticing that of all the sects extant in the colonies in the Revolutionary period, the Quakers are the only one that has not thriven; all the others have multiplied a thousand fold. They alone have dwindled till they are now arrived at the verge of extinction. As concerns the Revolutionary struggle, a few "Deistical Quakers," like Benjamin Franklin, acted an influential part, but as a sect they had neither part nor lot in the matter.

When we speak of the Christian Church in connection with the struggle for independence, we have occasion, therefore, to notice only Presbyterianism and Episcopacy; always remembering that that imperfect form of Presbyterianism called Congregationalism existed exclusively in New England.

As introductory to the history of the Presbyterian Church during the Revolution period, it is necessary to consider briefly its condition at the opening of the scene. In all the provinces south of and including New York, except Pennsylvania, the Episcopal Church was either expressly established by law or at least peculiarly favored by the colonial governments. Episcopal churches and parsonages were built by the aid of the royal governors, and often by public tax. The clergy were salaried by assessments on the property of the citizens at large. Their stipends were fixed by law, and were collected, where it was necessary (and practicable), by execution and distress.

In New York the profligate Lord Cornbury—bankrupt in character and fortune—was a zealous friend of "the present happy establishment in Church and State."* In New Jersey, by one of those retributions which often attend unhallowed

* See letter of Rev. Dr. Auchmuty to Sir William Johnson of date 20th May, 1770.

love, the natural son of Benjamin Franklin, the last royal governor of the province, was a bitter enemy of both the political and religious liberty for which his father contended. Maryland, originally a Roman Catholic proprietary grant, was organized ecclesiastically as a branch of the Church of England, containing in 1775 about 20 parishes. In Virginia, where the union of Church and State was closest, the clergy were "presented" to their "livings" by the governor, and the value of the benefice was calculated, as also in Maryland, in the great staple of the province. The salary was settled by act of legislature in 1721 at 16,000 pounds of tobacco, or a cash equivalent of eighteen shillings the hundred pounds.* To every parsonage was attached a glebe of not less than 200 acres. In fact, the "ancient dominion" exhibited nearly as perfect an example of a Church-and-State establishment as the mother-country itself. Virginia was simply a cis-Atlantic magnified Hampshire or Bucks, where the clergy and the squirearchy held carnival and royal governors made it their ambition to be nursing-fathers to "the Church."

* In Maryland the salary was, in some cases, much larger, amounting to thirty, and even forty, thousand pounds of tobacco. The cash value of the salaries was from £50 to £80 colonial currency, which was depreciated in the various colonies from 25 to 50 per cent. below sterling value.

The parish ministers came from England, and were mostly such as England could well afford to spare. The "Venerable Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts," chartered in 1701, exerted itself to send out chaplains and missionaries, but the name of the society represented a sentiment which was then only feebly nascent in England. The funds were small and the candidates few. Rather than send none, the society sent such as they could get; and what these were the complaints and remonstrances from the colonies too clearly indicate. "Many of them," observes Dr. Hawks, "were every way unfitted for their stations. The precariousness of the tenure by which they held their livings contributed not a little to beget in them an indifference to their duties, and the irregularities and crimes of an unworthy clergyman could not be visited effectually with the severities of ecclesiastical censure. Far removed from his diocesan, and standing in little awe of the authorities of the Episcopal commissary, he sometimes offended religion and morals with impunity, and still remained in the Church, a reproach to her ministry." *

* *Contributions to Ecclesiastical History*, etc., pp. 88, 89.

Mr. Whitfield wrote to the "Venerable Society, etc.," under date of November 30, 1740: "The state of the Church of England in America is at a very low ebb, and will in all probability be much worse—nay, at last dwindled into nothing—unless care be taken to

"In numerous instances," observes Rev. Dr. Babcock, "we have heard from the lips of old men lamentable descriptions of the immoral and profligate lives of their former rectors. Two or three days in each week during the season the parson spent in fox-hunting with his irreligious parishioners, and the hunt closed with bacchanalian orgies in which he usually bore the leading part. We have seen a manuscript volume of poetry composed by one of these Virginia shepherds that for amatory levity would have raised a blush on the cheeks of Horace.* Many came over, such as wore black coats and could babble in a pulpit, roar in a tavern, exact from their parishioners, and by their dissolute lives destroy rather than

send over missionaries that are better qualified for the pastoral office. It is too evident that most of them are corrupt in their principles and immoral in their practices, and many of them such as could not stand their trials amongst the Dissenters or were discarded by them for their profaneness and irregularities. Our Church seems to be their last refuge," etc.—*Episcopal Historical Collection*, 1851, p. 129.

Colonel Heathcote takes a more cheerful view of the society's influence, so far, at least, as Connecticut was concerned. "I really believe," he observes, "that more than half the people in that government think our Church to be little better than the Papist. But—I bless God for it—the society have robbed them of their best argument, which was the ill lives of our clergy that came into these parts, and the truth is I have not seen many good men but of the society's sending."—*Doc. History of New York*, iv. 122.

But Mr. Whitfield calls even the society's missionaries "ungodly despicable ministers."

* See *American Quarterly Register*, 1841.

feed their flocks."* A great writer, who in statements of fact is as true to history as in his portraitures of character he is true to nature, observes: "Unlike some of the neighboring provinces, Virginia was a Church of England colony. The clergymen were paid by the State and had glebes allotted to them; and there being no Church of England bishop yet in America, the colonists were obliged to import their divines from the mother-country. Such as came were not naturally of the very best or most eloquent kind of pastors. Noblemen's hangers-on, insolvent parsons who had quarreled with justice or the bailiff, brought their stained cassocks into the colony in the hopes of finding a living."† The condition of things was equally bad in Maryland, where Mr. Bancroft says, "Ruffians, fugitives from justice, men stained by intemperance and lust, dishonored the surplices they wore."‡

Presbyterians, even in those colonies or parts of colonies where they composed the great majority, were "dissenters," enjoying a precarious toleration. They could preach only by special license and in licensed meeting-houses. Nothing was more common than for them to be called before justices or governors and threatened or fined

* Dr. Hawks' *Ecclesiastical History of Virginia*, p. 65, quoted from a contemporaneous writer.

† *The Virginians*, by W. M. Thackeray, chapter v.

‡ Bancroft's *History*, iv. 129.

for illegally preaching the gospel. Such was the treatment that Francis McKemie, George Hampton and John McNish met with in the early part of the century; and down to the Revolution the experiences of the Presbyterian clergy were often of the same sort. In 1618 a law was passed in Virginia which enacted that every person "should go to *church* on Sundays and holidays, or lye neck and heels that night and be a slave to the colony the following day." For the second offence he was to be a slave a week and the third a year. In 1642 a law was passed that "no minister shall be permitted to officiate in the country but such as shall produce to the governor a testimonial that he hath received ordination from some bishop in England, and shall then subscribe to be conformable to the orders and constitutions of the Church of England; and if any other person pretending himself to be a minister shall, contrary to this act, presume to teach or preach publicly or privately, the governor and council are hereby desired and empowered to suspend and silence the person so offending, and upon his obstinate persistence to compel him to depart the country with the first convenience. Several of these laws were afterward repealed or the penalties mitigated, but they remained severe until the Revolution." *

It was quite in the natural order of things,

* Dr. Miller's *Life of Dr. John Rodgers*, p. 28.

therefore, that when the struggle broke out between Great Britain and her colonies the Episcopal and the Presbyterian clergy should take different sides. The former were entirely satisfied with the existing order and had nothing to gain by a change. They were, of course, the friends of a government which favored them, which gave them peculiar privileges, among others the privilege of looking down on and harassing all other Christians as dissenters. Their own instincts all tended the same way. They were English born or had been educated and ordained in England. They owed ecclesiastical allegiance to the English episcopate, or at near hand to the resident commissary of the bishop of London. The spiritual peers and the clergy "at home" all lent a zealous support to the measures of the Parliament for coercing the colonies. It was too much to expect that the Episcopal clergy here should separate themselves from the body to which they belonged. They simply stuck to the principles of loyalty and allegiance that were natural to them in the circumstances.

The Rev. Dr. Inglis, rector of Trinity church, New York, writing to the secretary of the "Venerable Society for the Propagation of the Gospel" in 1776, says, "I have the pleasure to assure you that all the society's missionaries, without excepting *one* in New Jersey, New York, Connecticut,

and so far as I can learn in all the New England colonies, have proved themselves loyal and faithful subjects in these trying times, and have to the utmost of their power opposed the spirit of disaffection. I must add that all the *other* clergy of our Church in the above-named colonies have observed the same line of conduct; and although their joint endeavors could not wholly prevent the rebellion, yet they checked it considerably for some time, and prevented many thousands from plunging into it."

He adds that very few of the *laity* who had either property or character joined in the rebellion.

This latter assertion had many and signal exceptions, or rather outside of New York and Connecticut had very little basis of fact. But the Episcopal *clergy*, at least in the breaking out of the Revolution, found themselves in broad and bitter antagonism with the spirit and views of the people. They could not reconcile themselves to read the service leaving out the prayers for the king, nor could they read them without subjecting themselves to interruptions, threats and a possible experience of tar and feathers. They took the safe course of demitting their functions, and shook off the dust from their feet as a testimony against their rebellious parishioners.

The Episcopal Church, therefore, which one

hundred years ago numbered about two hundred and fifty clergy of all sorts (except bishops), suddenly and universally disappeared. The temples were left, but the priests had departed. After the melancholy extinguishment of Mr. Duché, not one of them, with the exception of Dr. White, officiated as chaplain in Congress, and only Dr. Griffith and two or three more as chaplains in the army—a neglect with which it has been impossible to charge the Episcopal clergy in any period since. A few resolute parsons, like Mr. Beach in Connecticut and Dr. Inglis in New York, continued a while longer to pray for the king. Perhaps Dr. Inglis himself read the last collect for King George that was ever offered after the colonies developed into States. That distinguished and justly honored minister and (later) prelate, William White, states that he read the prayer for the king the last time on the Sunday preceding the 4th of July, 1776.

So it resulted that the Established Church and the colonial officials were on one side, and the American People on the other; just as, a few years later, it came to pass in France that the *nation* found itself struggling for freedom against the noblesse and the clergy.

Whatever may have been true in the history of earlier struggles between prerogative and liberty in England, it is quite unnecessary to

claim that there is any natural relationship between Episcopacy and monarchy, or any vital repugnance between it and popular institutions. It is even maintained by distinguished writers of that persuasion that there is a singularly close analogy between the constitution of their Church and the political Constitution of this country. Certainly no one will pretend that since the establishment of independence there have been any purer patriots or stauncher friends of liberty than the clergy and laity of the Episcopal Church. It is with no disposition, therefore, to cast reproach upon that large and intelligent Christian body, but simply because the truth of history requires it, that the fact is stated of the nearly universal as well as very bitter Toryism of the Episcopal clergy during the Revolutionary period. They continually wrote to England maligning the characters and ridiculing the efforts of the patriot leaders. They encouraged the ministry with assurances of certain and not distant success;* when the appeal was made "to arms and to the God of battles," they withdrew into obscurity, fled to Nova Scotia or returned to England.

We have all, perhaps, seen a coarse engraving purporting to represent the offering of "the first

* "I have not a doubt" (wrote Dr. Inglis in 1776) "but with the blessing of Providence His Majesty's arms will be successful and finally crush this unnatural rebellion."—*Doc. Hist. of New York,* iii., 1064.

prayer in Congress." The rotund and florid officiating chaplain in the front, clad in surplice, is the Rev. Jacob Duché, described by one of his brethren at the time as a "most amiable youth, of captivating eloquence."

The implication of the picture would seem to be that it was the Episcopal Church in the person of this patriotic and captivating "churchman" which pronounced her benediction on the opening struggle.*

The Rev. Jacob Duché was by birth a Philadelphian. His grandfather Anthony, a French refugee, had acquired property here, and on some occasion lent William Penn a little money. Thirty pounds of this remained unpaid. Penn offered Mr. Duché in satisfaction the entire square lying between Market and Arch and Third and Fourth streets, which he declined.

Jacob grew up a promising boy, and was sent to England to perfect his education. He studied at the University of Cambridge, in due time received episcopal ordination, returned home, and about 1770 became rector of Christ's church, Philadelphia.

In the Congress of 1776, on the nomination of Samuel Adams, he was elected chaplain. He

* On the celebration in Carpenters' Hall, Philadelphia, of the centenary of the First Congress, the portrait of Mr. Duché occupied a conspicuous position over the head of the chairman—with how little fitness the story here recited shows.

had previously acted in that capacity for the Continental Congress the year before; and now, robed in full canonicals, he came forward to offer the first prayer after the declaration of independence. The singularly appropriate lesson for the morning was the thirty-fifth Psalm: "*Plead thou my cause, O Lord, with them that strive with me, and fight thou with them that fight against me. Awake, and stand up to judge my quarrel; avenge thou my cause, my God and my Lord.*"

Having finished the lesson, the chaplain laid aside the prayer book, and stretching forth his arms broke out with great fervor of manner in the recitation of a highly-appropriate precomposed prayer: "*Look down in mercy, we beseech thee* (he prayed), *on these our American States, who have fled from the rod of the oppressor and thrown themselves on thy gracious protection. Give them wisdom in council and valor in the field; defeat the malicious designs of our cruel adversaries. Oh, let the voice of thine unerring justice, sounding in their hearts, constrain them to drop the weapons of war from their unnerved hands in the day of battle.*"

This glow of patriotic enthusiasm lasted for three months. Within that time New York was occupied and Philadelphia threatened by the British. Mr. Duché's faith, which apparently had in it little of the substance of things hoped

for, began to waver. He resigned his chaplaincy and withdrew into temporary obscurity. The following year the disasters of the patriot arms increased. Lord Howe defeated the insurgents at the Brandywine and occupied Philadelphia Then Mr. Duché once more came forth upon the scene. Providence was evidently frowning on the rebel cause; and far be it from Mr. Duché that he should be found fighting against God! He hastened to renounce his rebellion and "throw himself on the gracious protection" of Lord Howe. All this might easily have been forgotten; but with a bold stroke for immortality, he had the sublime impudence to write to General Washington urging him to pursue a similar course. He alleges that the cause of the revolted colonies was as hopeless as it was godless, represents the army, both officers and men, as a vulgar and undisciplined rabble, and recommends Washington to disperse Congress at the point of the bayonet. Having thus given the highest possible evidence of recovered loyalty, Mr. Duché sailed for England. Washington laid the insulting letter before Congress and directed the bearer to inform Mr. Duché that if he had had any idea of its nature he should have returned it unopened

I feel no hesitation in making this commentary on the pictorial fraud referred to, since this frivol-

ous renegade will be dismissed with equal contempt by the Church he dishonored as by Christians of every other denomination.

II.

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AND THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE.

THE course of the Presbyterian clergy, both during the war and throughout the whole series of events leading to it, is so broadly written on the pages of history that did it not seem to make a necessary part of a story like this I should content myself with barely alluding to it. It was exactly seventy years before, that their first presbytery had been organized in the city of Philadelphia, with only seven ministers. During this period of "Babylonian captivity," discouraged as they had continually been by the royal governors, fined and shut up in jail under pretext of their preaching without a license, their churches wrested from them, their congregations doubly taxed to sustain their own clergy and those of the Episcopal Church also,—they had yet multiplied to about one hundred ministers and twice that number of congregations. At the breaking

out of the Revolutionary war they were distributed into eleven presbyteries. The presbyteries of New York, Dutchess and Suffolk, with about thirty ministers, were mostly in New York. New Brunswick, with nine ministers, in New Jersey. The First and Second Philadelphia and Lewes, with twenty members, in Pennsylvania. New Castle, with eight ministers, and Donegal, with thirteen, were in Delaware and Maryland, Hanover in Virginia, with perhaps twelve ministers, and Orange, with fifteen, in North Carolina. With absolute unanimity these pastors and their people committed themselves to the doubtful and desperate struggle for independence. Heterogeneous as they were in origin—part New England Congregationalists, part Dutchmen of New Amsterdam, part Scotch-Irish, part Huguenots, part Highlanders, exiles of "the '45"—the common element of a Presbyterian polity and a Calvinistic theology fused them into one patriotic mass, glowing with an intense passion for civil and religious liberty. They openly took the attitude, and consented to the name and the responsibility, of *rebels* against the British government.

It was no doubt a zeal for religious, quite as much as for political liberty, that impelled them into this position—a sentiment that did not operate with equal force in New England, where the

Congregationalists, instead of suffering as dissenters, were themselves an established Church, able and not wholly indisposed to lay a heavy hand on other denominations.

Dr. Inglis says, "Although civil liberty was the *ostensible object*, the *bait* that was flung out to catch the populace at large and engage them in the rebellion, yet it is now past all doubt that an abolition of the Church of England was one of the principal ends aimed at, and hence the unanimity of the dissenters in this business. I have it from good authority that the Presbyterian ministers, at a synod where most of them in the middle colonies were collected, passed a resolve to support the Continental Congress in all their measures. This, and this only, can account for the uniformity of their conduct, for *I do not know one of them*, nor have I been able, after strict inquiry, *to hear of any*, who did not by preaching and every effort in their power promote all the measures of the Congress, however extravagant."*

It was not, however, by any passionate impulse, or by any fraudulent representation of their leaders, that they were brought into an attitude so much at variance with all their principles as Christians and all their instincts as subjects. The spirit of the Presbyterian Church, like that of the Epis-

* *State of the Anglo-American Church in* 1776, by Rev. Charles Inglis, *Doc. Hist. of New York*, iv. 1048.

copal, though perhaps in a somewhat less intense degree, is conservative. Comprehending in its clergy a body of educated as well as profoundly religious men, and in its membership mostly the upper and middle classes, containing few poor and none ignorant, with a large stake, therefore, in the stability of society,—the Presbyterian Church is necessarily pledged to order, loyalty and the maintenance of existing institutions. Presbyterianism has always been in quick sympathy with constitutional government, but is by no necessity hostile to monarchy. If at one time, while fighting the battle of English liberties, it was found in deadly and fatal collision with the sovereign, it was also found, in its recoil from anarchy, forward in rebuilding the throne. It was the English Presbyterians who joined with the army to bring about the Restoration; and they are not otherwise to be blamed for the consequences than as men may be blamed who fly from petty tyrants to the throne, and in their zeal for order are too little on their guard against treachery. They bound the king, so far as oaths could bind so "universal a villain," to the cause of religion and righteousness. They were, of course, betrayed; but it has taken several generations since to bring the world to a complete realization of the bottomless folly and faithlessness of the house of Stuart.

The Presbyterians of the American colonies

were imbued with a spirit of intense loyalty to the British government. In no part of the empire was there a more enthusiastic reverence for the throne. The provincials gloried in the title and claimed the rights of British subjects. They detested the brutal radicalism of John Wilkes and the English mob. In the admirable pastoral letter addressed to the churches by the synod of New York and Philadelphia on the breaking out of hostilities they say, "In carrying on this important struggle let every opportunity be taken to express your attachment and respect to our sovereign king George and to the revolution principles by which his august family was seated on the British throne. We recommend, indeed, not only allegiance to him from duty and principle, as the first magistrate of the empire, but esteem and reverence for the person of the prince who has merited well of his subjects on many accounts, and who has probably been misled into the late and the present measures by those about him. It gives us the greatest pleasure to say, from our own certain knowledge of all belonging to our communion, that the present opposition to the measures of the ministry does not in the least arise from disaffection to the king or a desire of separation from the parent state. We are happy in being able with truth to affirm, that no part of America would either have approved or

permitted such insults as have been offered to the sovereign in Great Britain. We expect you, therefore, to continue in the same disposition and not to suffer oppression or injury itself to provoke you into anything which may seem to betray contrary sentiments. Let it ever appear that you only desire the preservation and security of those rights which belong to you *as freemen and* BRITONS, and that reconciliation upon these terms is your most ardent desire."*

This was in May, 1775, a month after the slaughter at Lexington and the disastrous retreat of the British troops upon Boston.

This sentiment of affection for the person of the sovereign was with great difficulty rooted out from the hearts of the colonists. They wept with at least conventional tears the death of George II. and hailed with enthusiastic hopes the accession of his grandson to the throne.

That brilliant and too brief light of the American pulpit—the *Doctor Seraphicus* of the colonial ministry—Samuel Davies, in his sermon on the death of that profligate Hanoverian prince, George II., broke out into such strains as these:

"George is no more! George the mighty, the just, the gentle, the wise, George the father of Britain and her colonies, the guardian of laws and liberty, the protector of the oppressed, the

* See *Minutes of the Synod*, p. 468.

arbiter of Europe, the terror of tyrants and of France! George, the friend of man, the benefactor of millions, is no more. Britain expresses her sorrow in national groans. Europe re-echoes to the melancholy sound. This remote American continent shares in the loyal sympathy. The wide intermediate Atlantic rolls the tide of grief to these distant shores." And after pages more in this *maestoso vein* the strain changes to a joyful *allegro* as Mr. Davies turns to hail the newly-risen star of British monarchy. "*But I* retract the melancholy thought (he says). George still lives, he still adorns his throne, he still blesses the world in the person of his royal descendant and successor; and if the early appearance of genius, humanity, condescension, the spirit of liberty and love of his people, if British birth, education and connections, if the wishes and prayers of every lover of his country, have any efficacy, George the Third will reign like George the Second. Hail, desponding religion! lift up thy drooping head and triumph. Virtue, thou heaven-born exile, return to court! Young George invites thee. George declares himself thy early friend and patron. Vice, thou triumphant monster, with all thy infernal train, retire, abscond and fly to thy native hell! Young George forbids thee to appear at court, in the army, the navy or any of thy usual haunts.

What happy days are before us when RELIGION and GEORGE shall reign!" And then, soaring on the wings of Virgil's prophetic muse and contemplating the coming *Saturnia regna*, he exclaimed, "Such a presage renders the blessings we shall receive under the reign of George the Third almost as sure as those we have received under that of George the Second." This (may I reverently add) he spoke not of himself, but being a prophet he foresaw obscurely the benefits which the patriotic and conscientious stubbornness of the sovereign would be the means of conferring on the colonists; for surely, if the prophetic charisma has ever lighted on any of the sons of men since the days of the apostles, it was upon him who, twenty years before Braddock's only surviving aid was called to the command of the American armies, spoke of "that heroic youth, Colonel Washington, whom Providence seems to have preserved in so signal a manner for some important service to his country."*

Let us think kindly of that narrow-minded, obstinate, devout, exemplary man and king whom our fathers were reluctantly forced to defy and disown. His reign signalized the era of decency in the British court which has broadened into the

* *Religion and Patriotism the Constituents of a good Soldier*, a sermon preached to Captain Overton's independent company of volunteers, raised in Hanover county, Virginia, August 17, 1755.

high-toned morality of the present reign. "The improvement in public morals at the close of the eighteenth century," observes Lord Campbell, "may mainly be ascribed to George the Third and his queen, who not only by their bright example but by their well-directed efforts greatly discouraged the profligacy which was introduced at the Restoration, and which continued with little abatement till their time." *

"O brothers speaking the same dear mother-tongue," said that beautiful genius who recited here in our own ears with such unshrinking fidelity the story of the "Four Georges," "O comrades, enemies no more, let us clasp a mournful hand as we stand by this royal corpse and call a truce to battle. Low he lies to whom the proudest used once to kneel, and who was cast lower than the poorest. Dead—whom millions prayed for in vain! Driven off his throne, buffeted by rude hands, his children in revolt, the darling of his age, his Cordelia, killed untimely before him. Hush, strife and quarrel, over the solemn grave! Sound, trumpets, a mournful march! Fall, dark curtain, upon his pageant, his pride, his grief, his awful tragedy!"

Even down to the declaration of independence, through all the agitations, alarms and bloodshed-

* Campbell's *Lives of the Lord Chancellors*, vii. 182, American edition.

ding of the opening scenes of the great drama, and while engaged in deadly opposition to the British Parliament, the Presbyterian clergy continued to pray for the king and royal family. The explanation of this seeming anomaly is found in the very diverse views of constitutional allegiance entertained by the Americans toward the two parts of the British government. Not merely did they labor under the somewhat mistaken impression that George the Third was kindly disposed toward them, and was dragged reluctantly by popular enthusiasm into sanctioning the arbitrary measures against their liberties, but they also made a wide difference between the claims which the king and the Parliament had on their allegiance. The colonists had always insisted on the right of regulating their own affairs for themselves, of voting their own taxes, salarying their own judges, raising and officering their own troops. The colonial legislatures were in their view co-ordinate Parliaments. They uniformly denied that the imperial Parliament had any right to make laws for them while they were unrepresented in it. As against the British *people*, therefore, they had no declaration of independence to make. It was as absurd, they held, for the burgesses and knights of the English shires to vote taxes on the colonists as it would be for the colonists to reverse the process. The people of England were not

their masters. They were self-governing by their own charters under the British constitution. The single point of union between them and the English people was allegiance in common to the same sovereign.

The great and difficult step to be taken, therefore, by the colonists, in 1776, was to cast off their allegiance to the throne. It was against the king that the impeachments of the Declaration were addressed, and not against the Parliament. It was the long series of acts, so impressively recited in the preamble of that great instrument as implying every attribute that can define a tyrant, which forced the long-hesitating and reluctant provincials at length to sever the last tie which bound them to the British government.

It was with no insincerity, therefore, that the Presbyterian clergy, for more than a year after we were actually at war with Great Britain, continued to pray for "our sovereign and rightful lord, King George." They owned him as their legitimate prince, though they denied that the Parliament was their master. No doubt, also, the simple, domestic and religious character of the king and the various stories told of his kindly, frugal life had greatly endeared him to the colonists, with whom such virtues were prized at their full value. The last sound of prayer for George the Third died out of Presbyterian pulpits in the

month of June, 1776, and in its stead came a new collect, *sine monitore, quia de pectore*, for "the Congress of these United States and for His Excellency the commander-in-chief of the American armies."

It was just at this time that there swam into the ken of a distinguished British watcher of the skies a new planet, which, with perhaps a pardonable loyalty, he called the Georgium Sidus. Astronomy herself, who seldom stoops to flatter kings, has since called it after the name of the finder, "Herschel," or, more commonly, Uranus. The tidings of the discovery came to us through the French savans; and the data were so complete that our own Rittenhouse—himself, I may add, a devout Presbyterian—was able at the first sweep to fix his glass upon that outlying member of our solar system.

We have quite recently been informed, also from France, of the discovery of another planet of a certain magnitude, with so many hours and minutes right ascension, so much south declination, and some three degrees, perhaps, of daily motion north.* The Georgium Sidus, though certainly a star of the first political magnitude, had unfortunately so little right ascension in this continent and so many degrees of northern mo-

* Communicated by Professor Henry of the Smithsonian Institution to the *New York Tribune* in May, 1876.

tion that it soon set in clouds beyond the lakes, and was never able afterward to send its rays south of the St. Lawrence.

That increased fervor and importunity was given to the prayers which now went up for all those in authority might reasonably be presumed, and is illustrated by well-known facts. There had been for some time maintained in the city of New York by the Presbyterian and other clergy a weekly ministers' meeting for devotion and mutual improvement. Eminent among this band of Christ's servants was Dr. John Rodgers, previously of St. George's parish, Delaware, subsequently the first moderator of the General Assembly. He was an eloquent preacher, a firm and unwavering patriot, the friend and counselor of George Washington. No sooner had the clock struck the fated hour of liberty than on his motion the meeting was resolved into a concert of prayer for God's blessing upon the Revolutionary struggle, and was regularly attended as such until the British troops took possession of the city. The same sentiment pervaded our entire Church. From every Presbyterian pulpit in the land, from every Presbyterian hearth, went up the unceasing voice of intercession for the suffering country.

But the Presbyterian clergy of the period by no means confined themselves to the duty of

prayer for the cause of freedom. In the fluctuations of the war our own churches, like others, were frequently laid waste. They were burned by accident or design. They were occupied by the British troops for riding-schools, hospitals, jails or barracks. The congregations were dispersed or consisted only of non-combatants. The young, the middle-aged, in many cases the hale old men, were following after Washington, in those brave marches amid the sands of New Jersey, over the rocks and snows of Pennsylvania, till they stood at length—all that was left of them—in the trenches about Yorktown. The displaced pastors in many cases went with their people to the field. They served as army chaplains. They shouldered the musket or bore the spontoon in the actual shock of battle. Of more than one of them it may be said, as of Ulric Zwingle, *Pro Christo et pro patria etiam cum fratribus, fortiter pugnans, immortalitis certus, occidit.*

The records of the synod mention the death of Rev. James Caldwell, whose sufferings and death make one of the darker scenes in the drama of the Revolution, and of the Rev. John Rosburgh, of Allentown, New Jersey, who "was barbarously murdered by the enemy at Trenton on the 2d of January, 1777."*

* *Minutes of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia under May*

It was by such experiences as these for our Church and our country that we came *per ardua ad astra—through the stripes to the stars.*

The elders of our Church were equally forward in the cause of freedom—so much so, indeed, that if we should judge from numerous facts we might almost conclude that our entire eldership during that period was divided into *teaching elders* and *fighting elders.* A highly significant illustration of this is the fact that the five officers who commanded regiments or parts of regiments at the severe fight of King's Mountain, Cols. Williams, Shelby, Campbell, Sevier and Cleveland, were every one elders of Presbyterian churches.*

The part played in the course of this struggle by Dr. JOHN WITHERSPOON has been so much the theme of remark throughout these Centennial services that it is something more than superfluous to go into any detailed account of him. Yet a sketch of this kind would be too defective if he were wholly left out. He came to America in 1768, an adult and thoroughbred Scotchman, in consequence of his election to the presidency of the College of New Jersey. He had already been distinguished as a vigorous polemic, a keen satirist, a staunch though not always prudent defender of evangelical religion and Christian morality.

21, 1777. This cruel act was not committed by the Hessians, as commonly stated, but by a party of British dragoons.

* Smyth's *Eccles. Republicanism*, p. 145.

His *Ecclesiastical Characteristics*, dealing as it does in sarcasm, irony and personal caricature, is among the more doubtful methods by which a good cause may be defended. It was an anonymous exposure of the theological system and moral and religious character of the *low and slow* "moderates" of the Church of Scotland.

The work fell like a bombshell into the camp of the philosophizing, theatre-going, semi-deistical clergy, the friends of Hume, Lord Kames and Robert Burns. An outbreak of wrath followed. Dr. Witherspoon was a member of the presbytery of Irvine, and had just been "presented" to the living of Paisley. The presbytery of Paisley took up the book, pronounced it false and libelous, and lodged a complaint of it and its reputed author before the synod of Glasgow. Dr. Witherspoon defended himself in a firm and ingenious speech, challenging the proof of his authorship of the offensive publication and charging the presbytery of Paisley with a gratuitous and unauthorized attempt to destroy him indirectly, instead of coming manfully forward and tabling charges against him.

The result was his acquittal and triumph. But he fared less successfully in a subsequent collision with the civil courts. He was indicted for attacking certain persons by name from the pulpit, found guilty of libel and sentenced to the pay-

ment of a considerable fine. In his defence before the synod of Glasgow, Dr. Witherspoon had observed that if he had spoken of the Scottish Kirk with half the severity that many English writers had employed toward their own clergy "he should need to keep a ship always ready to flee to another country." The ship arrived now just at the critical moment, bringing to Dr. Witherspoon an invitation to accept the presidency of the College of New Jersey. He embarked and sailed away, leaving his sureties to settle as they could with the justices of the quorum.*

The *Ecclesiastical Characteristics* made an impression by its severity and personality much beyond what can be explained to the modern reader by its literary merits. The irony is too broad and coarse, and leaves the reader too little opportunity for the exercise of his own penetration in discovering the application. Another essay of the author's, an allegorical history of the Christian Church, and particularly of the Church of Scotland, under the figure of a "corporation of servants," is both far wittier than the *Characteristics* and much freer from objectionable personalities.

In all Dr. Witherspoon's miscellaneous writings

* Sprague's *Annals of the American Pulpit*, article JOHN WITHERSPOON.

the influence of his familiarity with the writings of Dean Swift is very observable. The treatise last named is evidently modeled on the *History of John Bull*, and while wanting in the grotesque humor of Swift's dialogue carries out the allegory with almost as grave and consistent an irony. With far less genius than the dean of St. Patrick's, he had the same literary audacity, the same plain, nervous English style, the same passion for dabbling in politics, and perhaps a little too much of the same willingness to indulge in coarse jests and allusions.

John Witherspoon was as true a type of the average Scotch Presbyterian mind as John Knox himself, from whom he is said to have descended. Hard, resolute, pugnacious, his mission was to fight the battles of religious liberty under what standard soever; and it may be regarded as probable enough that had he come to America at an earlier age he would have been as ready to draw the sword as to wield the pen in the cause of independence. While quite a youth his tastes led him to look on at the field of Falkirk, where the Highlanders of Charles Edward routed the royal army, and where, though a non-combatant, he remained a prisoner in the hands of the rebels. The bright blossoming of his piety and culture was guarded by the spines of a high temper and

a formidable logic. He bore on his very front the legend of his country's thistle, *Nemo me impune lacessit.*

Such a man, though but a recent immigrant, was as valuable as he was a ready champion of the rights of the colonies. His sentiments rapidly grew up to the height of those of the most advanced patriots. In his letter "On conducting the American Controversy" and his "Thoughts on American Liberty," while continuing to profess affection and loyalty to the British throne, he exposed with great clearness the actual situation of affairs and sketched with the hand of a statesman the steps the colonies should pursue for the vindication of their rights. In the pulpit he was equally outspoken. On the 17th of May, 1776, appointed by Congress as a day of fasting and prayer, he preached a sermon (afterward published with a dedication to John Hancock) on the text, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee, and the remainder of wrath thou shalt restrain." The theme was "God's dominion over the passions of men," and was drawn out into the proposition that "the ambition of mistaken princes, the cunning and cruelty of oppressive and corrupt ministers, and even the inhumanity of brutal soldiers, shall finally promote the glory of God; and in the mean time, while the storm continues, his mercy and kind-

ness shall appear in prescribing bounds to their rage and fury."

In the course of this sermon Dr. Witherspoon said, "You shall not, my brethren, hear from me in the pulpit what you have never heard from me in conversation: I mean railing at the king personally, or even his ministers and Parliament and the people of Britain as so many barbarous savages. Many of their actions have been worse than their intentions. That they should desire unlimited dominion if they can obtain or preserve it is neither new nor wonderful. I do not refuse submission to their unjust claims because they themselves are corrupt or profligate, though many of them probably are so, but because they are *men*, and therefore liable to all the selfish bias inseparable from human nature. I call this claim unjust of making laws to bind us in all cases whatsoever, because they are widely separated from us, are independent of us and have an interest in oppressing us. This is the true and proper hinge of the controversy between Great Britain and the colonies."

A few days after this sermon was preached Dr. Witherspoon became a member of the provincial Congress of New Jersey, and on the 22d of June was chosen one of the representatives to the general Congress. Only four days elapsed between his taking his seat in this august body and

the 2d July, when the declaration was adopted. He had not heard the debates; and though his own mind was irrevocably made up and he came, indeed, under instructions to vote for independence, yet to satisfy his own sense of self-respect he desired to hear the whole argument in the affirmative presented. To satisfy him and one or two others similarly situated this was agreed to; and, by the choice of his colleagues, Samuel Adams came forward and went over the whole ground.

Witherspoon no longer pretended any hesitation. He had not been willing to vote on so momentous a question without both hearing and giving reasons. He declared himself fully satisfied, and urged that the declaration should be passed without delay. He thought the country was ripe for it, and more than ripe: it was in danger of *spoiling* for the want of it. Besides this single dictum and the fragment of a speech traditionally imputed to him, we have no means of knowing what particular services he rendered the country on the floor of Congress; but his published "speeches" are a monument of his enthusiasm in the cause of liberty. In successive pamphlets he laid open before the world the causes and character of the war, warned the British people of the consequence of persisting in it, and in the name of his adopted countrymen

avowed that they infinitely preferred extermination to the surrender of their liberties. From this high flame of heroic argument he could descend to pillory a renegade parson or lampoon a tory printer. James Rivington, besides his other claims to notoriety, had "the fame to be lashed by his pen." In the cause of independence he fought with "what trivial weapon came to hand." *Libertati* (for liberty, he thought, as well as for necessity) *quodlibet telum utile.* For some enemies of freedom he scorned a sword. It was honor enough if he mauled them with a bludgeon or even defiled their faces with dirt. His sun both rose and set partly in clouds; but its middle course at least was resplendent with the light of heroism as a patriot, zeal and success as an educator of youth and faithful testimony as a preacher of the gospel.

The formal histories of our Church relate how many others of our clergy helped on the struggle for independence by brave words and brave deeds, by valiant service in the field or wise counsel in the senate. The whole weight of the only body of clergy and churches which, out of New England, enjoyed any appreciable prestige or influence, went undivided in aid of the cause of liberty. The schism in the Presbyterian body had been happily healed seventeen years before. The Church was absolutely harmonious and at peace within

herself, and acted as a unit in the struggle. There were a few instances, like the famous and witty Mather Byles, of Congregationalist tories, not one of a Presbyterian. The social status, the education and culture, the eloquence, the faith, the prayers of our Church fathers were enlisted on the side of independence; so that, as that staunch friend of the colonies, Horace Walpole, said, "There was no good in crying about the matter. Cousin America had run off with a Presbyterian parson, and that was the end of it."*

It is a circumstance of interest connected with this history that our struggle with Great Britain had nothing whatever of the character of a religious war. When, twenty years earlier, the provincials fought by the side of the British regulars for the mastery of the continent, it was against aliens and papists, with a legitimate horror of wooden shoes, frogs and the whore of Babylon. "Virginians, Britons, Christians, Protestants!" exclaimed Samuel Davies in 1756, "if you would

* Letter to the Countess of Ossory, August 3, 1775.

He was never tired of launching his indignant witticisms at the parliament and the conduct of the war. "The Americans, at least, have acted like men. Our conduct has been that of pert children: we have thrown a pebble at a mastiff, and are surprised it was not frightened."—December 15, 1774. "A great majority in both houses is as brave as a mob ducking a pickpocket. They flattered themselves they should terrify the colonies into submission in three months, and are amazed to hear there is no such probability. They might as well have excommunicated them and left the devil to put the sentence in execution."—February 18, 1775.

save yourselves and your families from all the infernal horrors of popery, if you would preserve your estates from falling a prey to priests, friars and hungry Gallic slaves, if you would preserve the pure religion of Jesus from superstition, idolatry and tyranny over the conscience, strike home in such a cause!"

But *here* we were arrayed against our brethren of the same Anglo-Saxon race, speaking the same "dear English tongue," and professing the same evangelical faith of the Reformation. Even those unfortunate Hessians, who were sold by the greed of their prince to kill and be killed in battles in the result of which they had no interest, were our fellow-Protestants and, I may say with a little allowance, our fellow-Presbyterians, formidable to our grandmothers by their outlandish speech and their bear-skin caps much more than to our grandsires by any forward or ferocious valor in the field. They were the subjects of Frederic II. of Hesse-Cassel, himself a pervert to Romanism, while the great majority of his people were of the Reformed or the Lutheran confessions. It is pathetic to be told that when nine hundred of these poor "driven cattle" laid down their arms at Trenton, and were formed into columns to be marched off to their prisoners quarters, they lifted up their sad voices in the old familiar strains of a Vaterland's hymn, "Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott" or some other.

Their own "wehr und waffen" had proved, indeed, but a poor reliance in their ignorant struggle against liberty. But God was their refuge and their strength, a very present help in trouble. The war was neither carried on, therefore, with that ferocity which characterizes religious wars, nor did it leave legacies of unsatisfied vengeance behind. Many of the Hessians remained as voluntary settlers when the royal armies finally withdrew, and became a valuable element in the composition of American society.

If we examine the records of the synod of New York and Philadelphia during the war, we find frequent evidence of the intense interest with which the struggle was viewed and the hearty patriotism of the Presbyterian clergy. In the pastoral letter already referred to, issued to the churches the 22d of May, 1774, the synod urges, "Be careful to maintain the union that at present subsists through all the colonies. In particular, as the Continental Congress now sitting in Philadelphia consists of delegates chosen in the most free and unbiased manner by the body of the people, let them not only be treated with respect and encouraged in their difficult service, not only let your prayers be offered up to God for his direction in their proceedings, but adhere firmly to their resolutions, and let it be seen that they are

able to bring out the whole strength of this vast country to carry them into execution."

Repeatedly the synod appointed days of fasting and humiliation in view of those sins which had brought down the "just judgment" of God in so destructive a war upon the colonists; and they made the last Thursday of each month "a monthly concert of prayer" for its early and successful termination. They felt no difficulty, as devout students of God's word and providence, in reconciling the unjust and wicked character of the war on the part of Great Britain with its righteousness as a part of the divine administration towards an ill-deserving generation. As subjects, indeed, they were the victims of oppression and misgovernment; but as sinners, they laid their hand upon their mouth and acknowledged that they received no more than the colonial iniquity deserved.

In 1779 the synod, "taking into consideration the great and increasing decay of vital piety, the degeneracy of manners, want of public spirit, and prevalence of vice and immorality that obtains throughout our land, and that the righteous God, by continuing still to afflict us with the sore calamity of a cruel and barbarous war, is loudly calling the inhabitants to repentance and reformation, and as a means thereto to deep humiliation and frequent and fervent prayer," appointed the 17th of August to be observed for that purpose, and renewed the

recommendation for the patriotic monthly concert. Identically the same action, in the same words, seems to have been taken by the synod the year following, and the same month and day fixed upon for public humiliation and prayer. In 1777 the Continental Congress having appointed a general fast to be kept on the 17th of May, the moderator, by his own authority, postponed the meeting of synod till after that day; which was allowed to pass *pro hac vice* under protest. Louis XVI., whose throne was already beginning to totter, had become our ally; and on the 17th of May, 1782, the synod appointed a committee, of which Dr. John Witherspoon was chairman, to prepare an address to the French minister, congratulating him on the birth of a Dauphin, "son and heir to the crown of his royal master;" that unhappy "Bourbon" who died in the prison of the temple, but whom it is still believed by some we had "among us" disguised under the alias of Eleazar Williams, and in the shape of an Episcopal missionary to the St. Regis Indians.

III.

STRUGGLE FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

The Presbyterian Church came out of the war whose success she had done so much to ensure, depleted indeed in her churches, many of which had been destroyed, and in her membership, which had left large contingents on every battle-field of the war, but with her organization intact, her machinery all in working order, and with a vigorous salient life that fitted her for an immediate career of growth and influence. That she stood far in advance of any other denomination in the land cannot be doubted. During all the preceding eight years of distraction and suffering, her ministry had steadily increased. The work of home evangelization had been systematically prosecuted. Pastors were detailed by order of the synod to supply occasional services to vacant congregations. Books of "practical religion" were purchased "for distribution among the frontier inhabitants;" missionaries were despatched to plant and nurse churches in the feebler colonies; chaplains were commissioned for the army; frequent cases of licensure and installation occurred; the work of discipline was faithfully attended to. The Indian fund, the widows' fund, the fund "for the education of poor and pious young men for the ministry,"—all these were carefully ad-

ministered. In every month of May during the war the synod held its regular "sederunt;" though the disturbed state of the country often prevented whole presbyteries from attending. Day after day during the sessions the quaint record informs us that "the synod met according to adjournment, *ubi post preces sederunt qui supra;*" an expansion of the cabalistic letters U. P. P. S. Q. S. found in the earlier minutes.

Particularly deserving of mention is the wise and firm policy of the synod in respect to the qualifications of candidates for the ministry. The urgent need of ministers in various parts of the country led to the natural suggestion, so often renewed in later times, that young men of suitable gifts and piety might be introduced to the ministry after only brief intellectual discipline. Such an overture was made to the synod in 1776 by the Presbytery of New Castle. The synod replied that "the superior advantages attending an education in public seminaries render it highly expedient to encourage the young men to finish their academical studies in such institutions, as means of securing a learned ministry; and presbyteries are ordered to promote this end by warmly recommending it to those who have the ministry in view. Yet as presbyteries are the proper judges to determine concerning the literary and other requisite qualifications for the

ministerial office, it is not intended to preclude from admission to trial those who have not had the opportunity of obtaining public testimonials or degrees from public seminaries."

To the same effect was a brief and positive deliverance of the synod in 1785. "An overture having been brought in in the following terms, viz., 'whether, in the present state of the Church in America and the scarcity of ministers to fill our numerous congregations, the synod or presbyteries ought therefore to relax in any degree in the literary qualifications required of intrants into the ministry,' it was carried in the negative by a great majority."

This was in noble harmony with the doctrine of the Kirk of Scotland as set forth in the first book of Discipline. "Neither for rarity of men, necessity of teaching, nor for any corruption of time, should unable persons be admitted to the ministry. Better it is to have the room vacant than to have unqualified persons, to the scandal of the ministry and hurt of the Kirk. In the rarity of qualified men we should call unto the Lord, that he of his goodness would send forth true laborers to his harvest."

The Presbyterian Church in America thus maintained her hereditary character for a thoroughly trained and cultured ministry. Her clergy at the close of the war were few in num-

ber, not exceeding probably one hundred and fifty; but they were men who had borne the test of fire; the peers for talent and accomplishment of the foremost in the State. They wore the prestige of a suffering and triumphant martyr-Church, fully identified with the spirit of the country. If any sect of Christians in the newly-founded republic could reasonably have claimed special favors from the State it was the Church of Rodgers and Caldwell, of Davies and Witherspoon, of Stanhope, of the Alisons and Blair Smiths, and the others whose conspicuous zeal had given the war the popular character of a "Presbyterian rebellion;" men whose lives had proclaimed before England and the world,

> "We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
> That Shakespeare spake; the faith and morals hold
> Which Milton held. In everything we are sprung
> Of earth's first blood, have titles manifold." *

It is not strange that other sects, conscious of this fact, looked upon her with some jealousy and alarm. Not the slightest effort did our fathers make to avail themselves of these advantages. They desired nothing but equal rights *for* all and *with* all Christians. In 1781 and again in 1783 they adopted this declaration: "It having been represented to synod that the Presbyterian Church suffers in the opinion of other denominations from

* Wordsworth, sonnets dedicated to Liberty, I. xv.

an apprehension that they hold intolerant principles, the synod do solemnly and publicly declare that they ever have and still do renounce and abhor the principles of intolerance, and we do believe that all peaceable members of civil society ought to be protected in the full and free exercise of their religion."

These just as well as generous sentiments were by no means universally entertained at that time. No sooner did the sun of peace illumine the land than Episcopacy, which had wholly disappeared from view, came forth again and with a singular lack both of modesty and justice endeavored to reclaim its lapsed colonial prerogatives. Our Church fathers were obliged to engage in a new struggle for religious equality.

This struggle took place chiefly on the soil of Virginia, in which, as already observed, Episcopacy had been most thoroughly established. On the 5th December, 1776, after a debate lasting for two months, in which Thomas Jefferson and other great men of the Old Dominion took part, the assembly of the State, *against the remonstrances of the Episcopalians and Methodists*, repealed all laws either requiring attendance on Episcopal services or levying taxes for the support of Episcopal worship; but all churches, chapels, parsonages, glebe lands, etc., originally the property of a people full two-thirds of whom belonged to

other denominations, were still left to the Episcopal Church. This was only an imperfect disestablishment, and the adherents of that Church by no means relinquished the hope of regaining the exclusive privileges they had lost.

Strong demonstrations were made toward suppressing "unlicensed preachers," punishing the irregularities of "*sectarian*" worship, and confirming the Episcopal Church in the unequal privileges it still retained.

That great patriot and broad Christian, Patrick Henry, brought forward in the Virginia legislature a bill for the incorporation of all Christian societies and the support of public worship by general tax. The splendid eloquence and immense popularity of the author gave dangerous advantages to the measure, and he urged it for two or more sessions with characteristic vehemence. The resistance to this bill—a bill which embodied in fact or in clear prospective all the evils of a union of Church and State—was led by the Presbytery of Hanover in Virginia, and it here becomes proper to give a brief history of the origin of that presbytery.

Previous to the year 1740 there was but a single Presbyterian church, so far as is known, in Eastern Virginia. The few who were not Episcopalians were Baptists or Quakers. In that year there was living in Hanover county (a

district made famous as the birthplace of Patrick Henry and Henry Clay, and "blazed broader yet in after years" as the scene of some of the fellest conflicts of the civil war) a well-to-do planter named Samuel Morris. He by no means belonged to the upper class of Virginia society, but was a plain man, working with his own hands, and, according to a MS. statement, joined the business of a mason to that of a planter. His soul had famished under the ministrations of the fox-hunting, tavern-haunting parish clergy. But the Spirit of God had touched his heart, and the providence of God strangely brought the truth of the Gospel within his grasp. Reaching blindly in the dark for some one to guide him in the way of life, he met the hand of Luther stretched out across two centuries, and bearing the commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, that most individual and subjective of all commentaries, "wherein is set forth most excellently (as the title page reads) the glorious riches of God's grace, and the power of the gospel, to the joyful comfort and confirmation of all such as do hunger and thirst for justification in Christ Jesus." Full as it is of Christ, and of redemption through his blood alone, it would scarcely now be considered the fittest work to present to an inquiring soul. But in Hanover county books were few and scarce then; and of the dilute, sugared and illustrated books contain-

ing salvation made easy, there were none. The awakened mind of the tobacco-planter grappled with the strong, vigorous exhibitions of gospel grace contained in the commentary on what Luther fondly called *his* epistle, and was led by it to a clear and solid peace in believing. He hardly thought or knew that he was a converted man; but he felt the love of Christ in his heart, and that love constrained him to try and do good to the souls of his neighbors. He invited them to come to his house on Sundays and hear him read passages from a book which had exerted so marked an influence on his own feelings. They attended, and he read to them chapter after chapter of the Bible and Luther on the Galatians.

That was all, absolutely. They knew nothing about extemporary prayer, and none of them durst attempt it. They had neither books nor culture for devotional singing.

Dull service, we might think, to bring together the people of a county! But such a famine of the word had been bred by the "Honeymans," the "Hagans" and "Sampsons" who had been sent over to evangelize the "Virginians"—so hungry were the people for the bread of life—that to enjoy this meagre worship they came trooping from a circuit of twenty, thirty or fifty miles. The gentleman planter rode out through his long

avenue, with his wife *en croupe* or ambling on her palfrey beside him; the humbler farmer drove along his mule team or his ox-cart loaded with his family; from the rude shanty and from the old English-like manor-house on the banks of the Pamunkey or the Chickahominy came the eager throng; and on the outside hung a dusky fringe from the "quarter," to catch what they could of that free gospel which proclaims liberty to the captive and the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound.

The meetings increased in interest, and conversions began to follow. The planter's house became too small for the congregation. Mr. Morris and some of his neighbors agreed to club together and put up a building—they had no thought of calling it a church—to accommodate the worshippers. It was known as Morris' Reading-House. The attraction of this service was such that other neighborhoods desired to enjoy the same privilege. Mr. Morris became a lay reader at several different and distant stations; and the inquiry began to grow into a general awakening.

In 1743 an improvement of the spiritual fare came in the shape of Whitfield's *Sermons*, then lately published, a copy of which was sent over from Scotland, and presented by the owner to Mr. Morris. The parish churches were neglected, and

the people thronged to hear the simple story of the cross recited by these unauthorized lips.

The clergy took the alarm and called on the courts to visit the offenders with the prescribed penalties for absence from public worship. Mr. Morris and his friends were summoned before the justices, interrogated and fined; he himself twenty different times. The laws of Virginia frowned as sternly on all *religiones illicitas* as did the laws of the twelve tables. To secure any toleration a worship must be at least that of some "national religion." *

The dissentients were summoned to declare what denomination of Christians they belonged to. The question puzzled them not a little. They knew nothing of any sect besides the Quakers, and they were certainly not Quakers. They asked leave to consult together before replying to His Honor's inquiry. What they knew of gospel truth they had learned mostly from Martin Luther. The vanity of all outward services and formal rituals when the troubled conscience is crying out for peace, and the solid ground of hope presented in free justification through the grace that is in Christ Jesus, commended itself

* On the subject of Samuel Morris and the Presbyterians in Virginia, see Foote's *Sketches of Presbyterian Churches*, p. 119; Dr. Miller's *Memoir of Dr. John Rodgers*, p. 27, sqq.; Dr. Rice's *History*, p. 113, 186, 330, sqq.; Bishop Meade's *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, vol. i. p. 426.

to their own experience. They came into court and answered that "they were Lutherans." Lutheranism was a national religion, and though the respondents only meant that they agreed with Luther in his views of the gospel, they escaped under this cover the punishment denounced against "sectarians."

Two English statutes respecting religious worship bore, or were alleged to bear, on the condition of the "Dissenters" in America. One was the Act of Uniformity of Queen Elizabeth, as further modified and extended in the reign of James I. and Charles II., making all dissent from the worship of the Established Church penal. The other was the Toleration Act of the Revolution government of 1688, which made cautious provision for the relief of dissenters. It did not, in terms, apply to the colonies. Indeed the specific mention of "England, Scotland, Ireland, Berwick-upon-Tweed and the islands of Jersey and Guernsey" as the scope of its operation might seem to exclude them; and the king's attorneys in Virginia always denied the right of the Presbyterians to avail themselves of its protection. It was at best a meagre and ungracious concession, and left the freedom of worship hampered with vexatious conditions.*

In the varying and unsettled state of judicial

* See the act in *Neal's History of the Puritans*, Appendix XIII.

decisions on this point, colonial dissenting preachers were treated with more or less rigor according to the tempers of royal governors or county justices; sometimes indulged on clearing themselves by oath of all suspicion of Unitarianism, popery or jacobitism; sometimes fined and driven out of the country.

While Mr. Morris and his friends were passing through this ordeal it happened that the Rev. William Robinson came, preaching as an evangelist, into the Valley of Virginia. He was the son of a wealthy English Quaker, but himself a Presbyterian, a member of the presbytery of New Brunswick and a zealous, rousing preacher of the gospel.* He was heard on some occasion by persons who had been accustomed to attend on the reading services of Mr. Morris. The latter was informed of this new evangelist and of the harmony of his doctrines with those of Luther and Whitfield. The result was an invitation to Mr. Robinson to preach on a set day in Morris' Reading House.

Notice was widely given and great crowds came together at the appointed time. But highly recommended as Mr. Robinson was for his evangelic zeal and faithfulness, these simple souls were jealous for the purity of the gospel. While the congregation waited they took the evangelist

* *Annals of the American Pulpit*, iii. 92.

aside and put him through a course of thorough examination on the leading doctrines. The result was satisfactory, and Mr. Robinson preached on that and several following days with great acceptance and a manifest blessing. They found themselves in perfect accord and sympathy with him. After a while it occurred to them somehow to ask him to what denomination of Christians he belonged. He said he was a Presbyterian. They then said that they believed *they* were Presbyterians.*

This was the germ of that strong vigorous Presbyterian Christianity which filled up and overflowed from that district, and of which the presbytery of Hanover was the first organized representative. Mr. Robinson's preaching made a profound impression. The people wished to express their gratitude by presenting him a considerable sum of money. He declined to receive it. They urged it upon him, but still he refused. They then placed it secretly in his saddle-bags the evening before he was to leave. Detecting the kindly fraud, he no longer resisted, but informed the donors that he would appropriate the money to the use of a young man of his acquaintance who was studying for the ministry under embarrassed circumstances. "As soon as he is

* It is not pretended in this brief historical sketch to give all the particulars, but merely to seize on the more salient points of the story.

licensed," said Mr. Robinson, "we will send him to visit you. It may be that you are now by your liberality providing a minister for yourselves."

They little knew the splendid result to which they were contributing, for that poor young man was Samuel Davies, the alpha in that southern cross of flaming evangelists who poured the light of the gospel on the "Ancient Dominion." Feeble in health and with the prospect, too surely realized, of an early death, he preached literally as a dying man to dying hearers. A more burning zeal, a more intense devotion to the work of saving men, a more heroic fidelity to truth and duty has never signalized the American pulpit. Four years after the events just related, in company with his intimate and equally distinguished friend, John Rodgers, he made his way to Hanover county, where he entered into and superseded the work of the friends who had helped in his education. It was only after an energetic struggle that he succeeded in vindicating his right to preach the gospel in Virginia, while his associate, notwithstanding the friendly disposition of Governor Gooch, was rudely refused a license and driven out of the colony.*

* Soon after Mr. Rodgers reached Williamsburg, one of the Established clergy of Hanover, who had followed him, appeared before Sir William Gooch and complained that this young gentleman before going to Williamsburg had preached one sermon in Hanover

Throughout this region Samuel Davies continued to preach with apostolic zeal, wearing out his frail body by extraordinary fatigues and exposures, till called for the short remainder of his brilliant career to succeed Jonathan Edwards in the presidency of the College of New Jersey.*

contrary to law, urging Sir William to proceed against him with rigor. Sir William's reply did equal honor to his religious sentiments and his official liberality: "Mr. ——, I am surprised at you. You profess to be a minister of Jesus Christ, and you come to me to complain of a man and wish me to punish him for preaching the gospel! For shame, sir! Go home and mind your own duty. For such a piece of conduct you deserve to have your gown stript over your shoulders."—Dr. Miller's *Life of Dr. John Rodgers*, p. 54.

See the noble vindication of himself by Mr. Davies, addressed under date 11th May, 1751, to the bishop of London, in the *Princeton Repertory* for 1840.

* The just and elegant inscription on his tombstone in the Princeton cemetery, perhaps from the classical pen of Samuel Finley, who succeeded him so soon in the presidency and was so soon laid beside him in the grave, is as follows:

"Sub hoc marmore sepulchrali, mortales exuviæ reverendi perquam viri Samuel Davies, A. M., collegii nov cæsariensis præsidis, futurum Domini adventum præstolantur. Ne te, viator, ut pauca de tanto tamque dilecto viro resciscas, paulisper morari pigeat. Natus est in comitatu de New Castle juxta Delaware 3 Novembris, anno salutis reparatæ, 1724. S. N. Sacris ibidem initiatus, 19 Februarii, 1747, tutelam pastoralem ecclesiæ in comitatu de Hanover Virginiensium suscepit. Ibi per 11 plus minus annos ministri evangelici laboribus indefesse et favente numine auspicato perfunctus, ad munus præsidiale collegii nov cæsariensis gerendum vocatus est, et inauguratus, 26 Julii, 1759, S. N. Sed, proh rerum inane, intra biennium febre correptus, candidam animam cœlo redidit, 4 Februarii, 1761. Hen! quam exiguum vitæ curriculum! Corpore fuit eximis; gestu liberali, placido, augusto. Ingenii nitore, morum integritate, munificentia, facilitate, inter paucos illustris.

Rei literariæ peritus; theologus promptus, perspicax. In rostris,

Other Presbyterian missionaries followed Mr. Robinson into Virginia. Congregations were gathered and churches organized; and on the 3d of October, 1755, the Synod of New York, reaching *over* into Virginia, ordered the erection of a new presbytery by the name of the Presbytery of Hanover. The original members were Rev. Samuel Davies, John Todd, Alexander Craighead, Robert Henry, John Wright and John Brown. The first meeting was appointed to be held in Hanover, and opened with a sermon by Mr. Davies.

This was the presbytery that now came forward to maintain against the eloquence of Patrick Henry and the zeal of Peyton Randolph the imperilled cause of religious liberty. In the most energetic terms they rejected for themselves, and reprobated for all others, any share in the proceeds of so ill-omened and illegitimate a partnership. They drew with a firm hand the line of demarkation between the functions of the Church and the State; showed the uselessness as well as the danger of attempting to support public worship by compulsory taxation; and insisted that any such measure was but the beginning of a usurpation, the end of which no man could de-

per eloquium blandum, mellitum, vehemens simul et perstringens, nulli secundus. Scriptor ornatus, sublimis, disertus. Præsertim viro pietate ardente in Deum zelo et religione spectandus."—Alden's *American Epitaphs*, Pentade I., vol. i., Art. 155.

termine. "These consequences," they said in conclusion, "are so plain as not to be denied; and they are so entirely subversive of religious liberty, that if they should take place in Virginia we should be reduced to the melancholy necessity of saying with the apostles in like cases, 'Judge ye whether it is best to obey God or men,' and also of acting as they acted."

"Therefore, as it is contrary to our principles and interest, and as we think subversive of religious liberty, we do again most earnestly entreat that our legislature would never extend any assessment for religious purposes to us or to the congregations under our care."

This vigorous protest decided the question for the time, and on the third reading the bill was rejected.

One other brief struggle remained. The idea of the necessity of a union of Church and State in some form had been so wrought into the Virginia mind, and the members of the old dominant Church reconciled themselves with so much difficulty to a simple equality with other sects, that on the conclusion of peace they came forward with a new attempt to recover their lost prerogatives. The project for a general assessment for religious purposes was revived, and a bill was introduced in the Legislature for securing to the Episcopal Church all the property, glebe lands,

&c., it had received from the State before the Revolution. This involved the rebuilding by public tax of all decayed or destroyed parish churches, the restoration of all sequestered church effects, and possibly also the payment of all arrears of clerical salaries.

The legislature of Virgina was, to a considerable extent, a system of pocket boroughs. The old hereditary legislators, the Nicholases, Randolphs, Lees, Pendletons, &c., had all been connected with the Established Church. They received the bill with great favor, and there was danger of its being rushed through in advance of any resistance. But the ever-vigilant presbytery of Hanover again came to the front and threw themselves into the breach. They had grown into veterans in the service of religious liberty, and shrunk from no conflict. A prompt, decided remonstrance from them brought the legislature to a pause.

The Presbyterian clergy seized the opportunity to act in mass. They came together in convention, adopted a new memorial and sent Dr. John Blair Smith, one of the most honored names in the history of the Church, to lay it before the House of Delegates. His argument of three days' duration settled the question finally and for ever. The bill was dropped, never to be revived.

This sounded the death-knell of all Church

establishment in America. Other States followed or walked *pari passu* with Virginia in the work of reform. With comparatively little resistance the union of Church and State was swept from the statute books of Delaware and Maryland, of New York, of North and South Carolina and Georgia; and religion, released from all trammels of human imposition, walked free and majestic in our emancipated States.

I cannot but lament that the name of that heroic presbytery, which stood foremost in the battle by which this victory was won, has, for the present, disappeared from our roll. Well may we be proud of a church that walked upright and unfaltering in the path of freedom when Patrick Henry stumbled.

With this defensive victory the presbytery of Hanover was content. The Episcopal Church indeed still retained a large amount of property, real and movable, which had been acquired by the proceeds of a general tax on all the inhabitants; particularly the glebe lands, of which most of the parishes in Virginia were possessed to the extent of not less than two hundred acres each. The first General Assembly of Virginia, after the adoption of the State Constitution in October, 1776, ordained "that there shall in all time coming be saved and reserved to the use of the Church by law established, the several tracts

of glebe lands already purchased, the churches and chapels already built, and such as were begun or contracted for before the passing of the said act for the use of the parishes; all books, plate and ornaments belonging to or appropriated to the use of the said church, and all arrears of money or tobacco arising from former assessments or otherwise."

This act recognized the Episcopal Church as still "established by law," and preserved to it in perpetuity the ownership of the glebe lands and other church property possessed before the Revolution. Being simply an act of the legislature, it was of course liable to repeal by any subsequent assembly; and considering their previous experience, it is not strange that other denominations should view with jealousy the slightest appearance of any concession of peculiar advantages to the Episcopal Church.

But it was not the Presbyterians who came forward to prosecute the quarrel against her. It was another body of Christians, the Baptists, who in their previous unorganized condition had suffered even more than Presbyterians from the laws against sectarian and unlicensed worship, that now, in their hour of triumph, turned against their late persecutors.

It was the "Baptists and their abettors" who urged the resumption by the State of the Church

lands. This object they prosecuted year after year with unabated determination, until, in 1801, success crowned their efforts and the glebes were publicly sold.

Dr. Baird maintains that this act of confiscation was unconstitutional, and adds that "the opposition to the Episcopal Church towards the end of the century was marked by a cruelty which admits of no apology."*

Not throwing any doubt whatever on the correctness of these opinions, we may yet observe that none of the melancholy consequences apprehended by the Episcopal clergy followed this spoliation. The glebes had been of little or no value to them. They consisted often of wild and unproductive lands. The advantage of being relieved from the odium of depending in any way on State bounty greatly overbalanced the small material loss. The laity came up to the demands of the voluntary system and assumed, no doubt cheerfully, the support of their own clergy. The character of the latter underwent a great and beneficent revolution. Purified by trials and led (after 1827) by their excellent prelate, Bishop

* Baird's *Religion in America*, I. iii.; *Collections of the Protestant Episcopal Historical Society for* 1851, pp. 166–181.

The *Address of the Rector of Antrim Parish*, on the proposed sale of the glebes in Virginia, is a modest and pathetic document, and serves to show how sweet are the uses of adversity for churches as well as for individuals.

Meade, they took on that devout, exemplary, evangelical type which has always since characterized the Virginia clergy.

IV.

INTERNAL VIEW OF THE CHURCH FROM THE CLOSE OF THE WAR TO THE ADOPTION OF THE NEW CONSTITUTION, 1783–1786.

It remains to add a brief outline of the history of the synod from the close of the war to the close of its own career as the chief court of the Presbyterian Church.

Articles of peace between Great Britain and her revolted colonies were signed at Paris, November 30, 1782. The war had virtually terminated a year before by the surrender at Yorktown of the last British army on the soil of America. The synod of 1783 met in the city of Philadelphia, undisturbed by any apprehensions of being abruptly adjourned to Bedminster or elsewhere by the approach of hostile forces. The attendance was small. The pastors were like men who had just escaped a great disaster, and were busied in gathering together their scattered effects and studying to repair the ruin. Money was wanting for the expenses of travel. The irredeemable paper currency had sunk to only a nominal value. It may be mentioned in illustration that the janitor

who waited on the synod received for his services three dollars in specie, which seems to have been regarded as equivalent to two hundred dollars continental currency, the amount that was paid the janitor the year previous.

The synod at once applied itself to the work of repairing the spiritual desolations caused by the war. They passed the emphatic disclaimer, already referred to, of any wish for advantages over their brethren of other denominations. They sent out to the churches a pastoral letter of congratulation and warning on the success of the American arms.

"We cannot help congratulating you," they say, "on the general and almost universal attachment of the Presbyterian body to the cause of liberty and the rights of mankind. This has been visible in their conduct, and has been confessed by the complaints and resentment of the common enemy. Such a circumstance ought not only to afford us satisfaction on the review, as bringing credit to the body in general, but to increase our gratitude to God for the happy issue of the war. Had it been unsuccessful, we must have drunk deeply of the cup of suffering. Our burnt and wasted churches, and our plundered dwellings, in such places as fell under the power of our adversaries, are but an earnest of what we must have suffered had they finally prevailed.

"The synod, therefore, request you to render thanks to Almighty God for all his mercies, spiritual and temporal, and in a particular manner for establishing the independence of the United States of America. He is the supreme Disposer, and to him belong the glory, the victory and the majesty. We are persuaded you will easily recollect many circumstances in the course of the struggle which point out his special and signal interposition in our favor. Our most remarkable successes have generally been when things had just before worn the most unfavorable aspect, as at Trenton and Saratoga at the beginning, in South Carolina and Virginia toward the end, of the war." They specify among other mercies the assistance derived from France, and the happy selection "of a commander-in-chief of the armies of the United States, who, in this important and difficult charge, has given universal satisfaction, who was alike acceptable to the citizen and the soldier, to the State in which he was born and to every other on the continent, and whose character and influence, after so long service, are not only unimpaired but augmented."*

The scarcity of copies of the Bible had long been felt as a serious evil. The colonies had been accustomed to depend on the mother-country for a supply, and during the war this source had

* Hodge's *History of the Presbyterian Church*, ii. 495.

been cut off. An edition of the Scriptures was, for their feeble typographical resources, an immense undertaking. But in 1781 an enterprising Philadelphia printer, Robert Aitkin, had successfully accomplished it, and both religious and patriotic motives led the synod warmly to second the effort. "Taking into consideration the situation of many people under their care who, through the indigence of their circumstances, are not able to purchase Bibles and are in danger of perishing for lack of knowledge," they ordered contributions to be made for this purpose in all congregations, and appointed a committee to receive and apply them. "And as Mr. Aitkin, from laudable motives and with great expense, hath undertaken and executed an elegant impression of the Holy Scriptures, which on account of the importation of Bibles from Europe will be very injurious to his temporal circumstances, synod further agree that the said committee shall purchase Bibles of the said impression and no other; and earnestly recommend it to all to purchase such in preference to any other."

Whatever brings appropriately into view the character of that illustrious chief whom Providence had indeed preserved, as Davies prophetically saw, "for some important service to his country," and who had shown in his own example "how noble a virtue is patience, and how sure,

when rightly exercised, of its own reward," will be regarded as suitable for these pages.

Dr. John Rodgers had served during a part of the war as chaplain of Heath's brigade. The Christian philanthropy and the resources of more recent times have provided that no soldier, even of such vast armies as those which crushed the French empire in 1870, shall be unfurnished with at least the New Testament Scriptures. But beyond the preaching of the chaplain, the revolutionary troops enjoyed no means whatever for religious instruction. As the disbanding of the army was at hand, Dr. Rodgers earnestly desired that each soldier should receive as a parting gift from his country a copy of the Word of life. The 12mo edition of Mr. Aitkin, just before issued, furnished the opportunity, and Dr. Rodgers addressed a letter to General Washington congratulating him on the restoration of peace and soliciting his co-operation in carrying out this scheme. General Washington replied as follows:

HEADQUARTERS, 11th June, 1783.

"DEAR SIR: I accept, with much pleasure, your kind congratulations on the happy event of peace, with the establishment of our liberties and independence.

"Glorious indeed has been our contest—glorious if we consider the prize for which we have

contended, and glorious in its issue. But in the midst of our joys, I hope we shall not forget that to divine Providence is to be ascribed the glory and praise.

"Your proposition respecting Mr. Aitkin's Bible would have been particularly noticed by me had it been suggested in season. But the late resolution of Congress for discharging part of the army, taking off near two-thirds of our members, it is now too late to make the attempt. It would have pleased me well if Congress had been pleased to make such an important present to the brave fellows who have done so much for the security of their country's right and establishment.

"I hope it will not be long before you will be able to go quietly to New York. Some patience, however, will yet be necessary. But patience is a noble virtue, and when rightly exercised, does not fail of its reward.

"With much regard and esteem, I am, dear doctor,

"Your most obedient servant,

"Go. Washington."

The synod also entered on measures for securing uniformity in the public praise of the Church. A committee was appointed to compare all the extant versions of psalmody and

digest from them "one more suitable to our circumstances and taste than any we have got;" a scheme which has only been successfully carried out in our own immediate times.

Action in regard to marriage within the prohibited degrees, as supposed to be defined by the Levitical law; in regard to slavery and the baptism of slave children; in regard to the demission of the ministry (refusing to permit the names of secularized ministers to be dropped from the roll); in regard to the pastoral visitation of common schools (inviting other churches to co-operate in this work); catechetical instruction in families, etc.,—was taken during these years.

The formation of new presbyteries broadened the geographical area of the Church; and it was found impossible in the condition of peace, as it had been during the disturbance of war, to secure the attendance of the remoter members. So long as it was made the business of no one in particular to attend, whole presbyteries were not infrequently absent.

It was quite natural, therefore, that attention should now be directed to the necessity of perfecting the organization of the Church, by providing for a representative assembly to be constituted of elected delegates. The thirteen States were occupied with this question at the same time with the thirteen presbyteries; and the

preliminaries for a General Assembly and a Federal Congress went on *pari passu*. This measure was first brought before the synod by an overture in 1785, and was made a special order for the year following, all the presbyteries being notified and expressly charged to attend.*

At the time fixed—viz., at the sederunt of the 19th of May, 1786—after full discussion it was resolved that, "considering the number and extent of the churches under our care, and the inconvenience of the present mode of government by one synod, this synod will establish out of its own body three or more subordinate synods, out of which shall be composed a General Assembly, synod or council, agreeably to a system hereafter to be adopted."

At this point the present chapter closes. The successful carrying out of this important measure, the new impulse given by it to the growth of the Church, her subsequent trials and triumphs, fall to be related by another hand.

A few miscellaneous remarks may be allowed in conclusion.

The Presbyterian clergy of the Revolutionary

* The thirteen presbyteries at that time were New York, New Brunswick, First Philadelphia, Second Philadelphia, New Castle, Donegal, Lewes, Hanover, Orange, Dutchess, Suffolk, Redstone and South Carolina.

period were well-educated men. Almost without exception they were graduates of American or foreign colleges. The era of modern science had not yet dawned, and a far larger proportion of the college curriculum than now consisted of drill in the elements of the Greek and Latin languages. French and German were almost entirely unknown. The Latin was still to a considerable extent the common language in which educated men of different nations did or might communicate with each other. Latin epistolary correspondence was still not wholly obsolete. Latin epitaphs were still almost universal for scholars, and the official proceedings at college commencements were conducted entirely in that language. The ability to read and write Latin was therefore a necessary part of the culture of a Presbyterian clergyman, and it was with justice and reason that candidates for the ministry were required to present among other "trial-pieces" a Latin exegesis on some common head in divinity. This they were quite competent to do with integrity and with reasonable correctness of style. The surviving Latin compositions of the time are not inferior to those of the contemporaneous English or Continental scholars. The very different distribution of the students' time in our present academical and college course, and the introduction of the modern languages as

media of communication between alien scholars, sufficiently explains the decay of Latin scholarship among us. That few candidates for the Presbyterian ministry are now able to compose correctly in the Latin language, and that the exegesis still required of them furnishes no test whatever (except a negative one) of their acquaintance with that language, is notorious; yet out of regard to the supposed requirement of the Form of Government, and in oversight of the alternative permission to employ "*these or other similar exercises*" as tests of the candidate's literary fitness for the ministry, it is still commonly insisted on. Surely the time has come for dispensing with a measure which is both futile and fraudulent, and tends to throw ridicule on the serious business of licensing candidates to preach the gospel.

The pulpit style of the Presbyterian clergy of a hundred years ago presents generally a good example of strong, plain, undefiled English. It was wholly free from those affectations and tricks of speech by which feebleness of thought is sometimes attempted to be disguised. The prose of Dean Swift, of Addison and the English divines of the 17th century was their standard. When Samuel Johnson, with his customary suavity, said to Dr. John Ewing, "Sir, what do *you* know in America? You never read. You have no

books there," "Pardon me, sir," was the reply, "we have read the *Rambler;*" which was doubtless true to a limited extent; but the inflated periods of that writer were no more to the taste of American scholars than his exaggerated toryism. During the hundred years that have since passed, the language has undergone no change. In the works of Dr. Rodgers, Stanhope Smith, Samuel Finley and their brethren, not a word will be found that is not now in good pulpit use. The sermons of Samuel Davies might be preached to-day, and only excite surprise for the somewhat elaborate eloquence of the style, and the extraordinary force and pungency of their dealing with the conscience. Indeed, it was only in the colonial pulpit that the evangelical preaching of Howe and Baxter found an uninterrupted succession. The English language in its higher purity of written and spoken use, and evangelical preaching in its fullest development, came across the sea with the colonists, and domiciled themselves here by the altars of liberty.

The church architecture of the Revolutionary period in America was of course of a rude and simple character. The natural arches of the forest, from which the churches were hewn by the axes of the worshippers, as well as the heavy pressure of snow which the roofs were each winter required to sustain, would naturally have

suggested Gothic form. But scientific knowledge of architecture was wholly lacking in the colonies; with each new settlement the demand for a sanctuary was immediate, and the people satisfied their need by the same hasty carpentry by which the sons of the prophets enlarged their accommodations at Gilgal. The first rough log churches had mostly given place a hundred years ago to plain white-painted structures, with straight-backed pews, lofty galleries and a pulpit perched halfway between the floor and the ceiling. Stove, upholstery, organ, they had none. Church spires were by no means common, and bells were almost unknown, except in the larger cities. Even in New York an Episcopal congregation was indebted to the Lutherans for the loan of a church bell.

The day of peace and freedom had begun. The ploughshare of war had broken up the public insensibility; the sowers went forth to sow. Divine influences came down as rain upon the mown grass, and the beneficent fruits of revivals of religion, missions, and church enterprise of every kind began to appear.

THE PERIOD FROM THE

ADOPTION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN FORM OF GOVERNMENT TO THE PRESENT TIME.

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FROM THE ADOPTION

OF THE

PRESBYTERIAN FORM OF GOVERNMENT

TO THE PRESENT TIME.

AMERICAN independence has been achieved. The colonies have taken their place as free and independent States among the nations of the earth. In bringing about this the most momentous political event of the last century the ministry and laity of the Presbyterian Church bore an essential and a conspicuous part. These men were the descendants of the Huguenots whose blood, shed in the cause of religious freedom, had baptized almost every acre of France; of the Dutch, who under William the Silent, had struggled and fought against civil and religious despotism amidst the dikes of Holland; of the Scotchmen who signed the Covenant with the warm blood of their veins, and who had fought to the death under the blue banner of that Covenant; of the heroes whose valor at Londonderry turned the scale in favor of the prince of Orange and secured the Protestant succession in

England—sons of the women who, during that memorable siege, carried ammunition to the soldiers, and in the crisis of the assault, sprang to the breach, hurled back the assailants and turned the tide of battle in the critical, imminent moment of the conflict.

These were not the men to be dazzled by specious pretexts, or to stand nicely balancing arguments of expediency, when issues touching human freedom were at stake. These were not the men to barter away their birthright for pottage. They who had endured so much in the cause of freedom in the Old World, who, for its sake, had left all and braved the perils of the ocean to seek a refuge in the forests of an unbroken wilderness, were not the men tamely to submit their necks to the yoke, how smoothly soever it might be fitted for them by the deft hands of king, Church or Parliament. Consequently, the Presbyterians in the colonies were almost to a man, and to *a woman*, patriots "indeed, in whom there was no guile."

In a Presbyterian community not far from the spot where the first blood of the Revolution was shed, in a Presbyterian convention which had for its presiding officer a ruling elder, was framed and promulgated the Mecklenburg Declaration, which embodied the spirit and the principles of the Declaration of Independence, and which

antedates that document by the space of a year and more; and even earlier than this, within the bounds of old Redstone Presbytery, the "Westmoreland Declaration" was made at Hanna's Town, in Western Pennsylvania.

None in all the land better understood the nature of the struggle, or more thoroughly appreciated the importance of the issue, than those men. They saw in the impending conflict more than a tax on tea or a penny stamp on paper—more even than "taxation without representation." In addition to political tyranny they perceived the ominous shadow of spiritual despotism, which threatened to darken the land to which they had fled as an asylum, and they esteemed their fortunes and their lives a cheap sacrifice at which to purchase for their posterity in succeeding generations the blessings of religious freedom.

Into the struggle, therefore, they threw themselves heart and soul. With enthusiastic devotion, they put at the service of their country the last penny of their substance and the last drop of their blood. Wherever a Presbyterian church was planted, wherever the Westminster Confession of Faith found adherents, wherever the Presbyterian polity was loved and honored, there intelligent and profound convictions in regard to civil and religious liberty were developed as nat-

urally as the oak grows from the acorn, and there, when the crisis came, strong arms and stout hearts formed an invulnerable bulwark for the cause of human freedom. As the Spartan defended his shield, as the Roman legions fought for their eagles, as a chivalrous knight leaped to the rescue of his sweetheart, so our Presbyterian ancestors, with a prodigal valor and an unquenchable ardor, sprang to the defence of their sacred rights.

An adequate history of their services, their sacrifices and their sufferings has never been written, and, alas! never can be written now. No monuments have been left from which such a history can be compiled. In the pulpit, in the halls of the provincial and the Continental Congresses, in the army as chaplains and as soldiers, the ministers rendered invaluable service by their eloquence, their wisdom, their learning, their courage and their example, while the laity took into the ranks a heroism as stalwart as that of the Ironsides of Cromwell. Presbyterian blood from shoeless feet tracked the snow at Valley Forge. From the Schuylkill to the Chartiers pulpits rang with utterances which were at once scriptural and patriotic, and which were so sound and fearless and inspiring that they deserve to take rank in the series of kindred testimonies in the Scottish Church borne by such men as Knox,

Buchanan, Rutherford, Brown of Wamphry, Cargill and Renwick. These utterances embodied principles which, emanating from the republic of Geneva, consecrated by the holiest blood of Scotland, sheltered and defended by more than Spartan heroism and endurance in the forests of America, now underlie the institutions of every free government on the face of the whole earth.

Republicanism is Presbyterianism in the State; so that in the victory of our Revolutionary forefathers there was a triumph of principles in defence of which our ancestors in the ecclesiastical line had for generations poured out their blood like water. These principles could find no hospitable or congenial home in Europe, and had fled for refuge to the great ocean-bound wilderness as their last hiding-place. A few half-clad, half-starved and not half-equipped regiments of provincial militia bore the ark which contained the charter of freedom for the nations. They bore it bravely and well, and when the clouds of war drifted away, lo! there stood on these shores, disclosed to the gaze of the world, a Christian republic which, as a pharos, flings its light across the ocean to guide the footsteps of nations in the path of liberty, of progress and of universal brotherhood. Every civilized nation on the globe has felt the throb of our free life. Over

the ark of our liberties dwells the political shekinah of the world, to which all the oppressed shall look, and guided by which they shall at last be led into a large and goodly Canaan of civil and religious freedom.

But the war is over. The transcendent achievement has been won. After seven years of fierce and bitter struggle, dove-eyed Peace has spread over the land her shadowing wings, dripping with celestial benedictions. The inchoate elements of national life have crystallized into a compact and symmetrical republican government. The colonies have become States and the Constitution of the United States has been adopted.

Owing to their pronounced and intense patriotism during the war, the Presbyterian ministers and churches had borne the brunt of the fury of the enemy. Pastors were driven away from their flocks, churches were turned into barracks or stables, and in many instances were torn down or burned. Congregations left without pastors, and exposed to all the deleterious influences of war, were scattered as sheep without a shepherd. Many churches could adopt the refrain of the prophet, *Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire, and all our pleasant things are laid waste.*

But as soon as the sword was returned to its scabbard the Church addressed herself to the task of restoring her broken walls, building up her waste places and gathering her scattered sheep to the fold again. With a sublime faith and an unerring intuition she divined the future greatness of the nation, and hastened to make such adjustments in her polity and organization as would enable her to meet worthily present and prospective responsibilities.

The complete constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, containing the Confession of Faith, the catechisms, the government and discipline, and the directory for the worship of God, was finally ratified and adopted by the Synod of New York and Philadelphia in the year 1788; and at the same meeting the necessary steps were taken toward the formation of a General Assembly by dividing the synod into four synods, and by ordering that a General Assembly, constituted out of the "said four synods," should meet in Philadelphia in May of the following year.

Thus organized and equipped, the Church stands abreast of the new era, "her loins girt about with truth, her feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace," in her hand "the sword of the Spirit" and with her face set toward the West.

The first General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America met in the Second Presbyterian church in the city of Philadelphia on May 21, 1789, and was opened, according to the appointment of synod, with a sermon by Dr. Witherspoon.

In fancy let us visit this small but august body of men.

In the moderator's chair is the courtly Dr. Rodgers, and at the clerk's table sits the chivalrous Duffield—whose ancestors, reaching America by way of England, Scotland and Ireland, had their Huguenot blood enriched with Puritanic and Covenanting ingredients—who during the war had preached under fire, and who, along with Beatty, had braved the perils of the wilderness in crossing the Alleghenies, in order to set up the standard of Presbyterianism on the banks of the Monongahela, the Allegheny and the Ohio, and to proffer the blessings of the gospel to the Indians on the banks of the Muskingum. On the floor is Dr. Witherspoon, of distinguished presence and of still more distinguished achievement, the eminent divine, the able statesman, the pure and valiant patriot, who shone alike conspicuously in the pulpit, on the floor of Congress and in the president's chair, in whose veins ran the blood of John Knox, and whose whole life proved him to be a worthy descendant of the

great Scottish Reformer. Beside him, and coming from the same presbytery (New Brunswick), and destined to be his successor in the presidency of the College of New Jersey, is the eloquent and learned Dr. Stanhope Smith, the founder of Hampden-Sidney College, now in the fullness of his marvelous powers and at the zenith of his splendid fame, whose oratory recalled the grandeur of Davies and did not suffer in comparison with that of Patrick Henry.

There, too, is the polyhistoric, the encyclopædic scholar, the profound divine, the accomplished provost of the University of Pennsylvania, Dr. Ewing, who on an hour's notice could lecture on any subject in the curriculum of the university, who was the peer of Rittenhouse in mathematics, and who in conversation could keep old Dr. Sam Johnson at bay. From Baltimore comes the renowned Dr. Patrick Allison, who went to that place when it contained only thirty or forty houses, and in a log hut had preached to a congregation of six families, but whose usefulness and reputation grew with the growth of the city, until, as a preacher, a presbyter and an accomplished and fearless controversialist, no one stood above him, and of whom Dr. Stanhope Smith said, "Dr. Allison is decidedly the ablest *statesman* we have in the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church." There, too, is Cooper,

one of the Apostles of the Cumberland Valley, a valiant military as well as spiritual leader; and the ungainly but saintly Moses Hoge, of Virginia, who, destitute of the natural gifts and graces of oratory, so moved men by his "blood earnestness" that John Randolph said, "That man is the best of orators;" and McWhorter, who had been the chaplain of Knox's brigade, and who in the darkest hour of the Revolution hastened to headquarters to encourage the commander-in-chief; and Azel Roe, who inspired a cowardly regiment with courage and then led them into battle, and who was as full of humor as he was of courage and patriotism; and Latta, who with blanket and knapsack had accompanied members of his church to the camp and the battle-field; and Dr. Sproat, in the pastorate the successor of Gilbert Tennent and the predecessor of Ashbel Green; and Dr. Robert Smith, who at the age of fifteen, having caught the spirit of Whitefield and having consecrated all the strength of a vigorous body to the work of preaching the gospel, was abundant in labors, and with his hand on the plough never once looked back; and Dr. Thomas Read, whose extensive missionary labors in the wilds of Delaware gave him so accurate a knowledge of the roads, paths and bypaths of the region, that he was the only man who could extricate Washington and his army from the perilous position which they occu-

pied at Stanton, before the battle of Brandywine, so that the modest pastor of Drawyer's Creek may be denominated the saviour of his country; and the genial Dr. Matthew Wilson, who was both a divine and a physician and eminent in both professions,—good men and true, all of them, who had "endured hardness as good soldiers" both in the cause of Christ and for their country.

In point of numbers this assembly was not large, there being on the roll only thirty-four commissioners, representing thirteen presbyteries, but in point of dignity, learning, ability, zeal and experience it compares favorably with any of its many illustrious successors. An able committee, raised for the purpose, reported fifteen rules for the government of the body, which have since been supplemented but never improved, so that substantially these are the rules by which, to this day, the General Assembly has been governed. Drs. Witherspoon, Allison and Stanhope Smith, the ablest committee which the Assembly could command, drew up an address to George Washington, President of the United States, which address, as a document, is worthy of the genius and eloquence of these three illustrious men, and which, while it has nothing in it of the cringing servility and sycophancy which are begotten of the adulterous union of Church and State, is yet, at the same time, a dignified and

loyal acknowledgment of the "powers that be" as "ordained of God."

Regarding with apprehension the fact that many of the presbyteries had failed to send commissioners, and thoroughly comprehending the importance of holding together the widely-separated parts of the Church by a common bond, and being as jealous against schism as the Israelites were when they went posting to Shiloh to demand of the trans-Jordanic tribes an explanation of the altar of witness, the Assembly adopted a circular letter "urging in the most earnest manner the respective synods to take effectual measures that all the presbyteries send up in due season their full representation," so that the scattered tribes of this Israel might, through their representatives, appear together once a year before the Lord at the sanctuary. Nor was the deplorable and pitiable condition of the frontiers forgotten or neglected, but received, as it deserved, most earnest and solemn attention. On a report of Drs. Allison and Stanhope Smith, the synods were requested to recommend to the General Assembly at their next meeting, two members, well qualified, to be employed in missions on our frontiers, for the purpose of organizing churches, administering ordinances, ordaining elders, collecting information concerning the religious state of these parts, and proposing the

best means of establishing a gospel ministry among the people; and in order to provide necessary funds the presbyteries were enjoined to have collections made and forwarded with all convenient speed. This action was in full accord with an unbroken line of deliverances stretching back to the very beginning of organic Presbyterianism in this country. The Church of our fathers was poor of purse, but rich in faith; and though "little among the thousands of Judah," she had a heart big enough to take in the world. From the first she has been a missionary Church. Woe be unto her if she lose that spirit!

Desirous, moreover, to spread the knowledge of eternal life contained in the Holy Scriptures, the Assembly adopted measures by which to aid the publication and dissemination of an American edition of the Bible, thus indicating the genuineness of their Protestantism by their love for and attachment to the word of God pure and simple.

Adam Rankin, from the presbytery of Transylvania, who, like the thief in the Gospel, seems not to have "entered by the door," but to have climbed up some other way, brought before the Assembly a portentous overture to the effect that the Church had fallen into a "great and pernicious error in the public worship of God by disusing Rouse's versification of David's Psalms

and adopting, in the room of it, Watts' imitation." Mr. Rankin being heard patiently "as long as he chose to speak," which was at "great length," an able and judicious committee was appointed to confer with him privately; but efforts toward relieving his mind proving futile, he was earnestly "recommended to exercise that Christian charity toward those who differed from him in their views on this matter which was exercised toward himself, and he was guarded to be careful not to disturb the peace of the Church on this head." These reasonable and fraternal recommendations were disregarded by him, however; and returning home, by a fierce and fanatical agitation of the subject, he produced in the Church in Kentucky a schism which for years entailed lamentable disaster upon the cause of Christ in that State. The temper and action of the Assembly in the premises show that the policy of the Church on the question of psalmody was settled.

In answer to an overture as to whether the "General Assembly would admit to their communion a presbytery who are totally averse to the doctrine of receiving, hearing or judging of any appeals from presbyteries to synods or from synods to General Assemblies, because in their judgment it is inconsistent with Scripture and the practice of the primitive Church," it was

said "that although they consider the right of appeal from the decision of an inferior judicature to a superior one an important privilege, which no member of their body ought to be deprived of, yet they at the same time declare that they do not desire any member to be active in any case which may be inconsistent with the dictates of his conscience." This does not prove or argue that the Assembly, which was almost entirely composed of Scotchmen and Irishmen or those of Scotch-Irish extraction, held or sympathized with lax ecclesiastical views, but it only shows that in peculiar and delicate circumstances the Assembly acted cautiously, prudently and charitably. It would have been marvelously strange if, after all her testimony and all her sufferings in defence of her principles, the Church should at this point have tamely repudiated these principles. The very calmness and mildness of the answer rather show the firmness of her convictions and the strength of her position.

The Church at this time consisted of four synods, sixteen presbyteries, one hundred and seventeen ministers and four hundred and nineteen churches, two hundred and four of which were vacant. Single presbyteries embraced whole States and indefinite expanses of territories besides. Pastors had parishes as large as England, Scotland and Ireland all put together.

The shock of the French revolution was felt on these shores. Infidelity in France, in the name of liberty, equality and fraternity, had committed atrocities for which human speech has coined no fitting or adequate terms. In its wanton, blasphemous impiety it had violated all sanctities, it had desecrated all shrines, it had trampled upon all rights, human and divine, it had christened the dreadest instrument of modern times the "holy guillotine," it had striven to quench the light of hope in the heart of man by decreeing that "there is no God" and that "death is an eternal sleep," it had wreaked its direst vengeance on the living, and then, hyena-like, had rifled the grave that it might dishonor the bones and dust of the illustrious dead. It has left its track on the page of history as the trail of a filthy snake, in orgies of lust and in carnivals of blood. The mephitic atmosphere of its licentious and ribald atheism was wafted across the ocean, and threatened to blight with a curse the virgin life of the young republic. If the principles of French infidelity had fairly taken root in American soil, they would have produced a harvest of anarchy, lust and carnage such as they had produced in their native soil; and for some time after the Revolutionary war it seemed that such a catastrophy as this awaited the nation.

During the war France was our ally, and thus

the sympathy between the two countries was close and responsive. French fashions, French manners and French modes of thought and of living dazzled the minds of many. Some of the leading statesmen of the time and many of the lower politicians were avowed infidels. French infidelity was discussed around the camp-fires, in legislative halls, in social circles, at the Federal capital and in the backwoods of remote Western settlements. War, too, had left its dregs and débris of vice, idleness, drunkenness and debauchery. The very air was heavy with the poison of deadly error, and the Church itself felt its paralyzing influence. Formalism, indifference and skepticism prevailed among professing Christians, while many of the pastors were mere "hirelings who cared not for the sheep." The foundations of religion, morality and of social order seemed to be giving way. In view of this state of things, the General Assembly, in the year 1798, issued a pastoral letter which to this day sounds like the blast of a trumpet. The letter speaks eloquently and solemnly of the "convulsions in Europe" and of the "solemn crisis" in this country; it points with alarm to the "bursting storm which threatened to sweep before it the religious principles, institutions and morals of the people;" it frames a dreadful indictment against the age, charging it with corruption of manners, prevail-

ing impiety, horrible profanation of the Lord's day, contempt for religion, abounding infidelity, which assumes a front of daring impiety and possesses a mouth filled with blasphemy; and it declares that among ministers of the gospel and professors of Christianity there was a degree of supineness, inattention, formality, deadness, hypocrisy and pernicious error which threatened the dissolution of religious society. A dark picture, truly, but not a whit darker than the subject which it portrayed.

Nor were such views and forebodings confined to the clergymen. Patrick Henry, in a letter to his daughter, says, "The view which the rising greatness of our country presents to my eyes is greatly tarnished by the general prevalence of deism, which, with me, is but another name for vice and depravity."

The clouds which thus lowered over the new States and threw their black shadows of evil portent far into the future were scattered by the breath of the Spirit of God going forth in powerful and widespread revivals of religion. During the Revolutionary war, on the borders of Western Pennsylvania, in a rude fort into which had been driven the scattered families of a sparse neighborhood, and in which they were held besieged by bloody savages, through the modest, earnest conversations of one layman, the mighty work began

which for ever settled on these shores the issue as between the gospel and French infidelity. It was "an handful of corn in the earth," in a strange seed-plot, but the fruit thereof to-day, in all these States, and far hence to the Gentiles, "shakes like Lebanon." "It is the Lord's doings, and it is wondrous in our eyes." From the year 1781 to the year 1787 there was almost a continuous effusion of the Holy Ghost in marvelous power upon the churches in Western Pennsylvania. Souls were drawn as by an irresistible magnet to the pulpit, and held for days and nights under the power of the truth in its enlightening and saving efficacy. To measure the results of such a work at such a time, in a society which was in a formative state, is as impossible as it would be to estimate the contents of the covenanted blessings of Abraham. From that rude fort "their line is gone out through all the earth."

When the work had gone on for five years in Western Pennsylvania, there might have been found across the Blue Ridge, one Saturday afternoon, in a dense forest, a mile from Hampden-Sidney College, four young students holding a prayer-meeting. For the first time in their lives they opened their lips in prayer in the presence of any except their God. Hidden in the deep recesses of the woods, they stammered forth their broken petitions, but no prayers uttered beneath

the domes of grand cathedrals and in the presence of thousands of rapt worshipers were ever more efficacious. The next meeting of these students was appointed in one of their rooms in the college, and behind bolted doors and in suppressed voices they began to sing and pray; but the news of the strange proceeding spread rapidly through the college, and soon a mob was collected at the door of the room, whooping, thumping, swearing and threatening vengeance; nor was the riot quelled until two of the professors appeared upon the scene and vigorously exercised their official authority. *A prayer-meeting raised a riot in Hampden-Sidney College!* If we take into account the additional fact that outside of this little praying circle there was not a copy of the Bible among the students, we can form an idea of the degree to which the leaven of infidelity had infected the minds of the young men of that generation. From that little prayer-meeting in the woods began a precious work of grace which spread through the counties south of the James River and swept up and down the great valley of Virginia, baptizing in its course the two literary institutions, Hampden-Sidney College and Liberty Hall Academy, which afterward became Washington College, and giving to the ministry such men as Drury Lacy, with "the silver voice and the silver hand," William Hill,

Carey Allen, Nash Legrand, James Blythe, John Lyle, James Turner and Archibald Alexander. Thus the proud, vaunting speculations and blasphemous scoffings and swollen insolences of infidelity were silenced in Virginia by the power of the Holy Ghost exhibited in the conversion of souls.

Such power as this was not pent up within State lines. The venerable Patillo came up from North Carolina to see the wonderful works of God, and returning home with mind and heart aglow finished his ministry in a blaze of religious fervor. A young man who years before had left North Carolina in order to seek an education in Western Pennsylvania, and who in the mean time had been converted under the preaching of Rev. Joseph Smith, and who was among the first of those who were educated under Dr. McMillan, having been licensed by the presbytery of Redstone, started southward to visit his kindred, and on the way stopped at Prince Edward and caught the holy contagion of the revival there, was the means under God of arousing the churches from a deathlike stupor and of diffusing the spiritual awakening from the Dan to the Catawba. With intense convictions, a fearless and merciless reprover of sin, a pitiless scourger of formality and hypocrisy, with an impassioned manner and a voice like seven trumpets, Rev. James McGready

flashed the terrors of the law into the minds and hearts of men until the stoutest quailed. After some years of most arduous and fruitful labor in North Carolina he removed to Kentucky, where his searching, discriminating preaching became the means of the great awakening in that State, the mighty influence of which, in a refluent tide, swept over Tennessee, the Carolinas, Virginia and Western Pennsylvania.

The revival in Virginia and North Carolina had brought into the ministry a band of young men whose hearts God had touched in a signal manner. Never was a knight of the cross more eager to encounter hardship and peril in the rescue of the Holy Sepulchre from the hand of the infidel than were these young soldiers of the Lord Jesus eager in their flaming zeal to engage in arduous and perilous enterprises for the glory of their Master. In order to furnish them a suitable field, the Synod of Virginia, in the year 1789, organized a committee on missions, which from year to year sent forth these young heralds to carry the gospel to destitute places. Among these went forth such men as Nash Legrand, an Apollo in physical grace and proportion, with a voice whose modulations were as pleasing as the dulcet notes of a lute, and "whose labors were more extensive in spreading the revival than any other agent employed in the work;" William Hill, one of the im-

mortal four who held the prayer-meeting in the woods at Prince Edward; the eccentric, witty, brilliant, genial and eloquent Carey Allen, "whom the common people heard gladly," and whose intense ardor soon consumed his physical life; Robert Marshall, who, spared through six hard-fought battles of the Revolutionary war to become a soldier in a holier war, enlisted all the enthusiasm of his impulsive nature in the work of preaching the gospel with earnestness and startling directness; Archibald Alexander, whom to name is to eulogize; William Calhoun, the companion of Carey Allen in his missionary toils and perils; the brilliant, able and scholarly John Poage Campbell (a lineal descendant of the seraphic Rutherford), whose sledge-hammer logic dashed to pieces the Pelagianism of Craighead, and who wielded a pen which was at one time as keen as a Damascus blade and at another as terrific and crushing as the battle-axe of a mailed knight; the praying Rannels; James Blythe, whose room had been the rendezvous of the praying students at Hampden-Sidney College; and Robert Stuart, the laborious missionary, the accomplished educator, the faithful pastor, a Melanchthon in council, but a Luther in battle. Of this number some labored in Virginia and some went to Kentucky. These were the young guard of Presbyterianism, who, snatching up the drooping standards of the

sacramental host, with a holy chivalry bore them onward through teeming dangers and sore privations, to plant them firmly and conspicuously on outpost and picket-line. These were the youthful heroes whose clarion voices, tuned to the love of Jesus, called the Church from out her entrenchments, in which she had for long been cowering, and made her aggressive in her whole mien, attitude and spirit, and led her forward to victories which rendered the spiritual opening of the nineteenth century as bright as "another morn risen on mid-noon."

The last century drew to its close amidst dense spiritual darkness in Kentucky. The rapid increase of population had far outstripped the supply of ministers and the multiplication of the means of grace. The labors of Father Rice and a few men of kindred spirit were wholly inadequate to meet the demands of the times. Amidst the contagious spirit of land speculation and the exciting scenes and incidents of border life, many who at their former homes had been exemplary Christians forgot their vows, struck their colors and went over to the ranks of the enemy, while those who, although not professors, had been respecters of religion, became open scoffers, and open scoffers grew more and more bold in iniquity. Mammon, rum and mad adventure ruled the hearts of men with despotic sway. Infidelity,

vice and irreligion came in like a flood, wave on wave, threatening to overwhelm and sweep away the foundations of all social, civil and ecclesiastical institutions. "*The people sat in the region and shadow of death.*" In the perilous crisis many of the ministers of the gospel grew faint-hearted, and through cowardice or apostasy betrayed the cause which they were sworn to defend. A stiff and stark formalism, and the unhappy controversy and schism on the subject of psalmody, had wellnigh destroyed all piety in the Church, while in the walks of public life infidelity prevailed and among the masses abominable and high-handed crime abounded.

Such was the desperate condition of things in Kentucky when the young missionaries from Virginia and North Carolina entered it and began to preach the gospel with such a fullness of conviction and with so awful vividness that all classes of men, from the philosophic skeptic to the red-handed desperado, were swayed by its power as the fields of headed grain bend before the sweep of the wind or as clouds marshal to the step of the storm.

The revival began in the year 1797 in the churches which were under the pastoral care of Rev. James McGready, who preached the most vital and solemn doctrines of the gospel with prodigious force and startling directness. The relig-

ious interest thus begun extended and deepened until, in the year 1800, on sacramental occasions, thousands came from far and near, bringing with them provisions and conveniences for temporary lodging. This was the origin of camp-meetings; and when once inaugurated, they became a distinctive feature of the times and constituted a marked agency of the work as it was carried on. When the camp was established, it became, for the time being, the centre of all life and interest. The plough rusted in the furrow, the sickle was hung up even in the time of harvest; all ages and all classes swelled the crowds which poured in from all sides, as the tribes of Israel converged by all paths to the tabernacle. Thousands of vehicles, with their thousands of neighing horses, filled the groves and gave the appearance of an army encamped. Men, women and children, old age with its staff, the child with its rattle, the invalid with his bed, the matron with her cares, the maiden in the freshness of her beauty, the young man in the glory of his strength, were there by tens of thousands.

From the moving, teeming multitudes the hum of voices arose like the distant roar of the sea. Now the volume of praise arises as the "voice of many waters," and now all is hushed except the impassioned tones of the preacher, which, magnetized by the burden of the message and by

intensity of emotion, kindle to a flame the hearts of the breathless throng as when the wind drives to race-horse speed the leaping flames on a dry prairie. The spectacle at night, with the scattered tents and wagons, and the multitudes of men, women and children and horses, all dimly revealed by camp-fires, torches, lamps and candles, and the deep, dark, silent forest around, made up a scene fit for a Raphael to picture in colors or for a Milton to paint in words. Amidst scenes and incidents so wild and strange and impressive, with so many inflammable elements commingling and with so many intense influences and forces co-operating to produce the deepest conviction of sin on the one hand and to excite the most ecstatic devotion on the other, it need not be a matter of astonishment that lamentable extravagances both of sentiment and of conduct were developed; but these extravagances formed no essential part of the revival, and are to be carefully discriminated from it. Some of the ablest and wisest pastors who were engaged in the work solemnly protested against the "bodily exercises" and all their unseemly concomitants. The Lord sent a gracious revival, but through the folly and vanity of man it was marred and disfigured by abominable excrescences; or, in the language of the venerable Father Rice, "it was sadly mismanaged, dashed down and broken to pieces,"

so that the work which began under auspices so bright ended in disastrous fanaticism, heresy and schism. When the Spirit of God moved the waters which had been so long stagnant, profuse froth and scum were thrown to the surface in the form of New Lightism, Universalism, Arianism and fanaticism.

The New Light schism in its brief and fitful career swept up the cast-off skins of errors, new and old, as they lay strewn along the track of time all the way from Gnosticism to Shakerism, and was at last merged into that creedless Babel of theological opinions founded by Alexander Campbell.

The widespread religious interest created a demand for ministers of the gospel, and at the same time begat a desire to preach the gospel in the minds of many who had no academical or other training to fit them for the sacred office. The licensing and ordaining such men, in utter and high-handed defiance of the requirements of the Book of Discipline, both in regard to literary qualifications and to the adoption and subscription of the Confession of Faith, led to the schism which resulted in the organization of the Cumberland Presbyterian church.

From these conflicts the Church emerged greatly reduced in numbers and resources, it is true, but, nevertheless, purer and more compact

than before. Amidst the fierce storms she preserved her standards intact, vindicated the cause of theological education, resolutely refused to abate an iota of the conditions of subscription of the Confession, and demonstrated to all the world that in times of high-wrought excitement it is safer to stand on the rock of principle than to drift with the eddying currents of expediency.

Notwithstanding these deplorable fanaticisms, apostasies and lamentable schisms, there was a genuine and extensive work of grace throughout the churches in Kentucky and Tennessee. The bodily exercises were no part of the work of the Holy Ghost. The revival was a work of God notwithstanding the bodily exercises. In the prolonged and intense excitement the infirmities of human nature threw to the surface a great many irregularities and extraordinary physical phenomena which, to a degree, obscured the real work in its progress and results. The winnowed wheat glides quietly into the garner, while the chaff and mildew darken and pollute the air.

In the second year of the present century the revival began at Cross Roads, in Orange county, North Carolina, and from that centre radiated its spiritual quickening light and power through a wide circle. Such was the interest in hearing the gospel from the living teacher that thou-

sands, in the depth of winter, stood listening the livelong day in drenching storms of rain, sleet and snow. Meetings were continued through the whole night to the breaking of the day, and then were resumed at nine o'clock on the next morning. The infidel, the scoffer, the formal professor, the drunkard, the debauchee, the giddy youth, the hardened criminal, the learned, the ignorant, the bond, the free, the master, the slave, were all brought under the resistless influence and were made one in Christ Jesus. No barriers erected by Satan were sufficient to arrest the progress of the work; but purged to a great extent of the extravagances and excrescences which had been so prolific of mischief in Kentucky, it gained thereby in depth and power, and has left in the Carolinas spots as marked in the memory, and as dear to the hearts, of Presbyterians, as the moors and mountains of Scotland are sacred in the eyes of the Covenanters.

In Virginia the revival began in a little prayer-meeting of private Christians among the mountains where there was no stated ministry—another instance of proof that genuine revivals are not produced by blowing trumpets or by the impressive marshaling of great crowds. Now, as ever, the Lord is not in the storm nor the earthquake nor the fire, but in the "still small voice." The more quietly and obscurely a revival begins, the

greater is its real power. The influence of that little band of praying disciples among the mountains, not one of whom probably could construct a half dozen consecutive sentences of good English, rose like the little cloud which the servant of Elijah saw from the top of Carmel, and descended in copious showers of blessing throughout the State for many years thereafter.

In the autumn of the year 1802 there were marvelous displays of divine grace in the pastoral charge of Rev. Elisha McCurdy, consisting of the churches of Three Springs and Cross Roads in Western Pennsylvania, in which churches a praying band had for some time before been observing a concert of prayer on each Thursday evening at sunset. The gracious influences thus kindled soon spread to the congregations of Cross Creek, Raccoon, Upper Buffalo and Chartiers, whose pastors were respectively Rev. Thomas Marquis, Rev. Joseph Patterson, Rev. John Anderson and Rev. John McMillan. The interest and power of this revival culminated at the "great Buffalo sacrament," in November, 1802, at Upper Buffalo, Washington county, Pennsylvania. Vast crowds attended this meeting, and religious services were continued almost without interruption from Saturday noon to Tuesday evening, and all these exercises were accompanied with marvelous displays of divine power. During

the progress of this meeting Rev. Elisha McCurdy preached his celebrated "war sermon," under the power of which, according to eye-witnesses, it seemed that every tenth man had been smitten down. Rarely in the history of the Church have such ministers labored together in a revival as met in this one—Patterson, "full of faith and the Holy Ghost," Marquis of the silver tongue, Anderson, whose searching discourses penetrated the hidden places of the human heart as a surgeon's probe goes to the bottom of a festering wound, and the lion-like McMillan, whose thunderous tones in preaching the terrors of the law made sinners feel that the trumpet of the archangel was sounding. Under the preaching of such men began the wonderful work of grace which in its progress reached and blessed "every Presbyterian congregation west of the mountains in Pennsylvania."

Nor were these outpourings of the spirit confined to the south and the west. In the eastern part of the Church the revival influence was not so mighty nor so extraordinary in its phenomena, yet it was no less genuine or precious or far-reaching in its influence and results. In the year 1802 a deep and continued work of grace began in the First church of Newark, New Jersey, which was then under the collegiate pastorate of Dr. Alexander McWhorter and Rev. Edward Dorr

Griffin. The ministry of Dr. McWhorter had been a series of revivals, and the history of this ministry had a brilliant continuation under Dr. Griffin, a physical and intellectual giant, whose splendid endowments were consecrated without reserve to the service of his Lord and Master; and whether preaching in a metropolitan pulpit or in a school-house or in a cramped and dingy town-hall, these endowments were all brought into play with all their overpowering effulgence. His wonderful endowments both of body and of mind, his majestic presence and his magnificent oratory, place him conspicuously in the front rank of the preachers of all the ages; and a revival of religion was the occasion on which he seemed to be most at home and on which his faculties worked most harmoniously and most brilliantly.

While in commanding ability and Demosthenic eloquence Dr. Griffin was without a peer, there were colaborers of his who were not a whit behind him in devotion and in influence. Such were Rev. Henry Kollock, upon whom the mantle of Whitfield seems to have fallen, Dr. James Richards, afterward the successor of Dr. Griffin in the First church of Newark, New Jersey, Rev. Asa Hillyer, whose every instinct was evangelistic, and whose thoughts and prayers accompanied his gifts to the ends of the earth, the witty and genial Armstrong (Amzi, D. D.), the amiable

Perrine (Matthew La Rue, D. D.), Robert Finley, "the father of the American Colonization Society," who, in his enthusiasm for the cause which he had espoused, brought the mightiest minds of the United States Senate to sit at his feet. These brethren, quickened by the spirit of revival, went forth two by two through the destitute portions of New Jersey, in quest of "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," and in these missionary tours they were greatly blessed. Preaching to the miners among the mountains they saw, as Whitfield in England had seen, the tears of penitence wash white furrows down the begrimed and hardened cheeks of these men. The work was quite general throughout the State, and persons of all ages and of all ranks and classes were brought to Christ.

From the year 1803 to the year 1812 the narratives on the state of religion which were adopted by the successive General Assemblies are almost uniformly cheering and inspiring by their intelligence of revival, of victory over infidelity, which had been so much dreaded, of steady, healthful growth and increasing aggressive power on the part of the Church. One year brings the news that "there was scarcely a presbytery under the care of the General Assembly from which some pleasing intelligence had not been announced, and that in most of the northern and

eastern presbyteries revivals of religion of a more or less general nature had taken place." In the following year we hear of remarkable outpourings of the Spirit of God over the "vast region extending from the Ohio River to the lakes, which region a few years before had been an uninhabited wilderness," as well as in the Synods of New Jersey, New York and Albany. Then again the glad tidings come up from Long Island, from the banks of the Hudson and from the "newly-settled regions in the western parts of the State of New York," which desert, under the auspices of grace, promised to become as the garden of the Lord; and at another time these glad tidings come from Philadelphia, Cape May, Baltimore and Washington City. From time to time the delegates from the Congregational churches of New England brought good news of revivals in Connecticut, in Yale College, in Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Maine. From the Merrimac to the Mississippi, from Cape Fear to Cape Cod, from the Chesapeake to the lakes, came year after year tidings of revival, of the conversion of sinners, of the discomfiture of infidelity, and of the triumphs of grace, which were more glorious than any that were ever bulletined by martial heroes from Nimrod to Moltke. In all this wide circle the General Assembly from its watch-tower "could

trace the footsteps of Jehovah," could perceive distinctly amidst the tumultuous strife the progress of the triumphal chariot of the Lord of hosts, and could see the pillar of cloud and of fire going before the people as they penetrated the great Western wilderness. With the smoke of the "clearing" rose the incense of prayer and praise. Thus into the foundations of our national institutions went the tempered mortar of sound theology and of vital godliness. With these fathers religion was not a theory or a philosophy, but a life.

The narratives on the state of religion frequently and eloquently refer to the conquests of grace over infidelity and false philosophy. They tell how these opposing forces were by the power of God driven from the field, and how their champions were either converted or else covered with confusion. They also repeatedly rejoice in the fact that the educated mind of the nation was turning more and more to the cross of Christ. When we remember the widespread prevalence of infidelity in the latter part of the eighteenth century and the front of brazen-faced assurance which it put on, and when we think of the persistent and malignant efforts which were made to brand Christianity as a vulgar delusion, utterly unworthy the consideration of an intelligent mind, and when we consider how this seductive

infidelity, under the guise of philosophy and respectability, had poisoned the political and social life of the nation,—we can understand the solicitude of the Church in the solemn crisis, and know why it was that she so rejoiced when she saw the banner of the cross lifted up and advancing, while the standards of the enemy went down amidst the panic-stricken ranks of unbelief.

Thus by the power of the Holy Ghost the gates of the new century on this continent were swung open. The Sun of righteousness arose, and the sentinels, from Plymouth Rock to the peaks of the Cumberland Mountains, passed the watchword, "*The morning cometh.*"

The first pulsations of organic Presbyterianism in this country were the throbbings of missionary zeal. As early as the year 1707 the presbytery ordered that "every minister of the presbytery supply neighboring desolate places where a minister is wanting and opportunity of doing good offers." The entire ministry of the Church was thus organized into a missionary corps. Like the children of Issachar, they were "men that had understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do." They divined the coming grandeur of the empire which, springing up in the forests of America, was to stretch "from sea to sea," and

they recognized clearly and felt profoundly the supreme necessity of laying the foundations of this empire in the principles of the word of God, so that it might be able to withstand the winds and floods and earthquake shocks which it must encounter in its march down the centuries. The Church and country greatly needed godly and faithful ministers, and also the means by which these ministers could be supported. Earnest and repeated cries for both men and money were sent to England, Scotland and Ireland, and any favorable response to these entreaties awakened the liveliest sentiments of gratitude in the hearts of these laborious, self-denying servants of God, who, with scanty material resources, but with a marvelous wealth of faith, were humbly and heroically discharging the obscure duties which belong to the "day of small things."

At the first meeting of the Synod of Philadelphia an overture was adopted to the effect that the several members of the synod "contribute something to the raising of a fund for pious uses." These ministers gave of their poverty, and according to the spirit of the overture, it was only after they had thus given, that they might "use their interest with their friends on proper occasions to contribute something to the same purpose." They did not merely inculcate benevolence, "as the manner of some is," but gave a

practical exemplification of it. They not only pointed out the way to their flocks, but led them in that way. As I may not traverse this part of the field, which has been so thoroughly canvassed, let it suffice to say that the Presbyterian Church in this country, from the very first, has been in heart and soul, in body and spirit, in life and limb, a missionary organization.

The General Assembly took up and carried forward the work which had been inaugurated by the presbytery and the synod. At its first meeting this subject occupied the earnest thought and care of the General Assembly, and the synods were enjoined to furnish, through the presbyteries, suitable missionaries, and the churches were urged to take collections for the cause, that thus both men and means might be furnished for the establishment of churches on the frontiers.

In the next year (1790) the Synod of Virginia, not having received the official action of the General Assembly, organized a very efficient "Commission of Synod," which sent its missionaries from the "bay shore to the Mississippi." I have in another connection spoken of the Commission of the Synod of Virginia, of the remarkable band of missionaries which that Commission sent forth, and of the great work which these missionaries accomplished within the borders of Virginia and in Kentucky and Tennessee.

The Synod of North Carolina also inaugurated measures of its own for advancing the picket-line along the extensive frontier. These synods were to report their operations to the General Assembly.

By these different agencies and from these different centres the aggressive work of the Church was pushed vigorously forward. The missionaries were itinerant, traveling over fields immense in extent and bristling with difficulties and dangers. The General Assembly sent its missionaries mainly to Central New York, Northern Pennsylvania and to the Eastern Shore of Maryland. One circuit extended from Lake George to the north-western frontier of Pennsylvania. Another stretched from Northumberland county along the branches of the Susquehanna, and beyond the head-waters of that river northward to Lake Ontario and westward to Lake Erie. At the beginning of the century the Synod of North Carolina had sent its missionaries, in connection with the missionaries of the General Assembly, westward to the Mississippi and southward wellnigh to the Gulf of Mexico.

In these aggressive movements of the Church the Indians were not forgotten; the work of "gospelizing" them occupied the early and earnest attention of the General Assembly. Abun-

dant and urgent incentives to such an enterprise were found in the condition and necessities of these savage tribes, while splendid examples of devotion and success in this field were on record as a sanction and an encouragement in the undertaking. The immortal author of *The Treatise on the Will*, "the greatest divine of the age," had spent the fullest and the ripest of his years among the Indians at Stockbridge, Massachusetts; and Brainerd, by his labors and apostolic zeal among the same people on the Delaware and the Susquehanna, had given to Christendom new ideas on the subject of missionary consecration and enthusiasm, and on the power of the gospel as a saving and civilizing agent among the lowest and most degraded classes. Under the power of such incentives, and in the light of these great examples, the gospel was preached to the Indians along the frontier from the Hudson to the Mississippi. Our forefathers, with their trusty rifles as a defence in the one hand, held out with the other the Bread of Life and the blessings of civilization and education to their treacherous and bloody foes. The dreadful war-whoop was answered by the trumpet of the gospel of peace. The Church kept bravely abreast of the line of population as it advanced westward. The watchmen of Zion, seeing the standards of the sacramental host borne steadily

onward over mountains, across rivers, through difficult and perilous places, and planted amidst the log cabins of the frontiersmen and the wigwams of the Indians from the St. Lawrence to the Gulf of Mexico, could have taken up the shout of the mediæval poet:

> "The royal banners forward go,
> The cross shines forth with mystic glow."

Presbyterianism has always been the patron and promoter of learning. An open Bible, an enlightened intellect and an unfettered conscience have ever been her watchwords. Whithersoever she has gone she has borne the torch of learning along with her. Her goings forth have been attended by an illumination like to that which attended the steps of Milton's Raphael in Eden. The pioneers of American Presbyterianism, true to the traditions of the past, carried the lamp of learning with them into the wilderness. Under the bare and rude rafters of log cabins they held converse with the mighty spirits of Greece and Rome, and within sound of the Indian war-whoop and within sight of the council-fires of savage tribes they laid the foundations of literary institutions whose influence has had a wider reach and a deeper current than ever belonged to the doctrines of the porch or the academy.

The log college of Tennent on the banks of

the Neshaminy first gave the distinctive stamp to American Presbyterianism, and that of Blair at Fagg's Manor (Pa.) was scarcely less influential, and shall ever have a secure place in its unique historic niche so long as it can be said, "Samuel Davies was educated here and went forth into the world an exponent and exemplar of his *Alma Mater;*" while that of Finley at Nottingham, Md., sent forth such men as Dr. Waddell, the immortal blind preacher, whose eloquence William Wirt has made familiar to every schoolboy.

In Western Pennsylvania, as early as 1782, Rev. Thaddeus Dod opened his log academy on Ten-Mile Creek; Rev. Joseph Smith, at Upper Buffalo, appropriating his kitchen for the purpose of a Latin school, gave it the dignified and classical title, "The Study;" while even earlier than this Dr. McMillan, on the banks of the Chartiers, laid the foundations of Jefferson College.

The same policy was pursued in North Carolina. The self-educated Patillo taught a classical school at Granville; Dr. Hall had his famous "Clio's Nursery" at Snow Creek, and his "Academy of the Sciences," with its philosophical apparatus, at his own house; the flaming evangelist McGready opened a school at his house; Wallis had a classical school at New Providence, McCorkle at Salisbury, and McCaule at Centre. Patillo and Hall not only taught, but wrote text-books. The spirit of

these men is indicated by an incident in the life of Patillo. Once, in his absence from home, his house was burned; and the first question on meeting his wife was, "*My dear, are my books safe?*"

Down the beautiful valleys of the Holston and the Clinch, in Tennessee, emigration poured from North Carolina, Virginia, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The first settled minister in this region was Rev. Samuel Doak, who built a log college, which in 1788 was incorporated as Martin Academy, the first literary institution established in the valley of the Mississippi, and which afterward, in 1795, became Washington College. Subsequently removing to Greene county, Mr. Doak opened his "Tusculum," an academy to prepare young men for college. This institution also developed into a college. A small library procured for Washington College in Philadelphia was carried to Tennessee in sacks on pack-horses. In five years after the first settlement of the State by Daniel Boone steps were taken toward the founding of a seminary of learning in Kentucky. The originators and promoters of this scheme were Presbyterians, and the school, the first in Kentucky, was opened in the house of Father Rice.

Presbyterianism is an Aaron's rod which always buds with intellectual as well as with spiritual

life. The Graces and the Muses, in chaste and modest fellowship with Christian virtues, dwelt in the Western forests. Beside the fires on the altars of pure religion burned the lamp of sound learning. "The church, the school-house and the college grew up with the log cabin, and the principles of religion were proclaimed and the classics taught where glass windows were unknown and books were carried on pack-horses."

Devotion to freedom, profound conviction of duty, staunch and unswerving loyalty to truth, stern adherence to principle, catholic charity, an active benevolence, love of learning, the spirit of missions and the power of revival,—these were the vital forces of early American Presbyterianism; and these forces had as the theatre of their operation the republic of the United States, with its vast and unsolved problems and its untold possibilities of wealth and power, whilst as the epoch of their development these forces had the nineteenth century, with its teeming enterprises, its concentrating energies, its momentous conflicts and issues.

Having thus endeavored to set before you clearly, in its distinctive characteristics, the Presbyterian Church of America during the last decade of the eighteenth century and the first decade of the nineteenth century, and having endeavored to place the Church fairly abreast of

the mighty current of modern history, the rest of my task must be despatched more summarily. In the execution of it I shall give only broad outlines and shall deal with forces rather than with facts.

The work of revival, the power of which had been felt from the St. Lawrence to the Mississippi, had evoked the spirit of missions, and the spirit of missions had enlarged the views and broadened the sympathies of Christians and of churches, and in this way different denominations had been brought together in friendly co-operation. In the year 1802 the General Assembly adopted the Plan of Union, under which a Presbyterian church might have a Congregational pastor or a Congregational church might have a Presbyterian pastor, these pastors retaining their respective ecclesiastical relations. The motives which prompted this action were in the highest degree laudable and honorable, but the practical operation of the plan was beset with difficulties, and these difficulties soon began to manifest themselves. Swift currents were now sweeping the Church out into untried waters. New elements, new forces and new issues entered into the history year by year. The incidents of the drama thicken. Events hasten; the tide of mingling peoples rolls westward; the steps of divine Prov-

idence will not tarry; States in the South and in the West rise as by magic; along new lines of trade and travel cities spring up in a night; vast and important mission-fields are rapidly opening, and the Church has neither the men nor the means with which to occupy these fields.

In the year 1806 the late Dr. James Hoge, of Columbus, Ohio, was sent as a missionary to "*the State of Ohio and* PARTS ADJACENT.

As the new age, with its tumultuous and mingling elements and its pressing demands on Christian activity, hurried on, it developed difference of views and of policy where unanimity of both had prevailed before. In pushing forward the cause of evangelization there were two antagonistic theories according to which the work was conducted. One theory multiplied voluntary and irresponsible societies in different localities, and operated from various centres without unity of purpose or of government. The other theory strove to unify the benevolent work of the Church and to bring it within the metes and bounds of ecclesiastical control. In the slow but steady working out of this latter theory the committee on missions, which was raised by the General Assembly in 1790, became a stated committee, the stated committee became a standing committee, and the standing committee passed into the Board of Missions in the year 1816.

In the same way successive efforts in behalf of ministerial education resulted at last in the Board of Education in the year 1819.

Besides these antagonistic views and policies in respect to the benevolent work of the Church, questions arose under the operation of the Plan of Union which touched the vital principles of Presbyterianism. There was no dispute as to what Presbyterianism was, but as to how far its fundamental principles might be ignored or suspended for the sake of expediency. These questions and the differences which arose out of them became more and more emphasized each succeeding year. By some the Plan of Union was put above the constitution of the Church. By others the Plan of Union was regarded as a masterly device for congregationalizing the Church, or else for destroying both Presbyterianism and Congregationalism and producing a hybrid monstrosity of ecclesiasticism which would be a caricature of both. The differences were deep, striking down to the roots of the Presbyterian system, and were consequently irreconcilable.

In addition to the differences in regard to policy and polity, there were deeper doctrinal controversies. The cloud which contained this storm came from New England. New measures and New Haven theology created a great amount of distrust and disturbance throughout the Church.

The very sincerity, earnestness and honesty of the men who were engaged on both sides of the controversy made the contest all the more determined and the excitement attending it all the more intense. Each succeeding year, with its discussions, conventions and trials for heresy, widened the lines of divergence and whetted the points of antagonism. With much of heroic devotion to principle as well as with much of mingled human infirmity and error on both sides, the contest waxed hotter and hotter, until it reached its culmination in the exscinding acts of 1837 and the division of 1838.

Of late years it has become quite the style to speak in a tone of deprecating pity of these ecclesiastical battles of forty years ago, as though they were mere quibbles about words or disputes about the tithing of the mint and the anise and the cummin, and to quote them as proofs of a very low state of piety and of the prevalence of a rabid spirit of scholasticism and of dead orthodoxy; but it becomes us to beware lest we fall into the condemnation of those who, "measuring themselves by themselves and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise." Deep and strong convictions of truth and of duty, and a firm adherence to these convictions at any cost, can never be a just cause of reproach to Christian men. For such convictions believers in all

ages have been "tortured, not accepting deliverance," and have counted their blood as cheap as water when shed in such a cause. They "contend earnestly for the faith" because that faith is infinitely precious to them. A Church or a Christian without sharp and distinctive beliefs is a body without a spinal column, bones or marrow. If ever the time come when men shall not care to defend what they hold as Presbyterians or Methodists or Baptists or Congregationalists, the time will have come when men will not care to defend the truth of the gospel at all. If to be a Presbyterian makes a man any the less a Christian in any sense or in any particular, then let us burn our Confession of Faith and our Book of Government, let us tear down and tear up the banner which was carried by our forefathers through so many persecutions. But if Presbyterianism is scriptural in theory and holy in its practical results, then let us never be afraid or ashamed to avow it. A Church without a creed is to one which has a creed as the hyssop on the wall is to the cedar of Lebanon or as the jelly-fish is to the Nemean lion. The danger is not that we shall hold these doctrines too firmly or cherish them too sacredly, but that through remissness and indifference we shall let slip the precious trusts which have come down to us on rivers of martyr blood.

It is a significant and remarkable fact, and one which deserves especial emphasis at our hands, that those years of controversy and debate which preceded the division of 1837 were years of spiritual growth and prosperity in the Church, "the Holy Ghost this signifying" that the doctrines of the gospel are the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation even when preached in strife and debate. Better preached thus than not to be preached at all. We are not justified in passing judgment on these men of '37, some of whom linger amongst us, who, "firm in the right as God gave them to see the right," followed their convictions straight to the issue regardless of sacrifices or consequences.

The division of 1838 was followed by a period of tumult, litigation and readjustment. The ploughshare ran through most of the synods and presbyteries, and through many of the churches even. Certain loose elements which were set afloat by these riving processes oscillated between the two bodies for some time, but at last attached to one or the other of them, or else drifted away to other spheres of ecclesiastical attraction and affinity. When the dust and smoke of the conflict were dispelled, the view revealed two Presbyterian churches with the same Confession of Faith and the same Form of Government and the same Book of Discipline, working side by side in the

same field, yet having differences which were quite characteristic and distinctive.

The Old School Church was to a remarkable degree homogeneous in its constituent elements, and was distinguished for a rigid orthodoxy and a strict ecclesiasticism. The New School Church, on the other hand, was not homogeneous in its constituent elements, and was distinguished for a liberal construction of the standards, and for an ecclesiasticism which for the sake of the voluntary and co-operative system of beneficence put in jeopardy the interests of a just and necessary denominationalism. The Old School Church continued in its orbit, in possession of its titles, dignities and endowments, while the New School Church, against its will, was flung off into a new and untried sphere. The Old School church had a well-defined policy, and went right on in its course, with scarcely a jar or a jostle in its ecclesiastical operations. The New School party, stunned by the sudden and summary blow of excision, without a legal status and beyond the pale of its wonted ecclesiastical relations, was at first without a fixed policy; and through abounding magnanimity refusing to disentangle itself from incongruous alliances, was by these alliances seriously distracted and weakened. Its generosity, magnanimity and charity are beyond all praise, but unhappily these amiable and noble qualities

outran the less dazzling and sterner attributes of wisdom, prudence and a just conservatism. The experiment of an amalgamated Presbyterianism, therefore, was made in propitious circumstances, under favorable conditions and by those whose sentiments and sympathies rendered the effort a sincere and cordial one; yet the experiment failed, and the failure has gone into history. There is nothing in this which is derogatory to the party which made the experiment, but it is, on the contrary, in the highest degree honorable to it that in the circumstances the experiment was made; yet the failure is none the less significant and instructive.

The changes which were made in the constitution by the New School Church were soon discovered to be disastrous to the interests at stake and to the efficiency of ecclesiastical operations, and the mistake which had thus been made was speedily rectified by restoring the "Book" to its original form and by reinstating it as the constitutional law of the Church both in the letter and in the spirit of it. In the violent agitations and amidst the swift and turbulent currents which succeeded the division the Church had been swept somewhat from its moorings, but as soon as the storm had subsided it swung back to the safe harbor and the strong anchorage of constitutional Presbyterianism.

The theory of co-operation and of undenominationalism, in spite of the most unselfish and liberal efforts in its behalf, gradually broke down, and the pitiless logic of facts forced the Church to adopt a policy against which her charity and her sympathies reluctated, but which the solemn calls of duty and the urgent exigences of the times not only justified, but rendered imperative. She undertook to educate her own ministry, to create and disseminate her own literature and to conduct her missions in her own fields in her own way; and when to a well-defined task she set her hand, the work glowed beneath her touch. A new energy thrilled along every fibre of her organic life. Full of hope and zeal and enthusiasm, with a united and inflexible purpose, she entered upon a new era in her history which was as radiant with promise as the roseate sky mantling with the blushes of the morning. She had come at length to a clear conception of her mission. She saw her work distinctly and emphatically outlined in a field which suggested and invited boundless effort; and to that work she went with heart and mind and soul exulting in the free play of her untrammeled individuality.

The Old School, at the time of the division, had a wonderfully homogeneous constituency, a clearly-defined theology, a pure Presbyterian form of government, a fixed policy, an enthusi-

astic unanimity of sentiment, leaders of consummate ability, the prestige which accrued from its legally-recognized status, an ecclesiastical machinery ready to its hand, a definite work to do and an entire singleness of purpose in the prosecution of that work. The Board of Missions (domestic) and the Board of Education had already been organized and in operation for a score of years. In the stormy year of 1837, amidst the tumults of excision and division, the Board of Foreign Missions was organized, and into this board was at once merged the Western Foreign Missionary Society, which had been formed and operated by the synod of Pittsburg for six years previous to this date; and thus "the wall was built even in troublous times." Nor did this old church, even amidst the absorbing interest and excitement of such a crisis as that of 1837, forget for so much as an hour that "the field is the world." The Board of Foreign Missions, which was then constituted, has continued to this day to be a source of steadily-increasing power and blessing, and on its records are the names of as heroic men and women as ever planted the cross among savage men or amidst "the pestilence that walketh in darkness," and its martyrology is as glorious as that which was enacted in the Coliseum or in the imperial gardens of Nero.

With a full recognition of the power of the

press and of the supreme importance of a sound theological literature, the Board of Publication was organized in the year 1838. Out of the work of Domestic Missions grew the Church Erection Fund of the New School Church and the Board of Church Extension of the Old School Church, both of which were merged at the reunion into the Board of Church Erection. Nor has the Church forgotten her worn-out veterans and their widows and orphans, and her efforts in their behalf resulted in the Board of Ministerial Relief. The benevolent agencies of the Church are not cunningly-devised frameworks of abstract and finely-spun theories, but each one of them has arisen out of the actual necessities of the work and the urgent, emphatic demands of the times. They are a growth, a development, not an invention.

In both branches of the Church during the separation the subject of slavery produced earnest discussion and deep, widespread agitations. In the New School Church the deliverances on the subject by the General Assembly became more pronounced from year to year. The Northern portion of that Church became gradually but surely more emphatic in its anti-slavery convictions and utterances, while at the same time the Southern portion, through a variety of potent and subtle influences, was quietly slipping away from

the testimonies of the Church against slavery and assuming the position that slave-holding was sanctioned by the Bible and was an institution not only to be tolerated but defended. Of necessity the breach between the parties became wider and wider each succeeding year. Their views were so divergent and so utterly irreconcilable that there was no hope or possibility of a compromise. The crisis came in the year 1857. The Southern synod withdrew. The debates preceding the schism were candid and fraternal, and the parties separated without bitterness and with sincere mutual respect and love.

In the mean time, the political horizon grew black with angry and portentous clouds, and muttering thunders gathered to a storm in which not only churches went asunder, but in which States which were knit together by ties of brotherhood "were rent with civil feuds and drenched with fraternal blood." Amidst the trooping furies of an awful civil war the Old School Church was riven asunder, the split following the line which separated the loyal States from those which were in rebellion against the Federal government.

At this point a word is necessary in regard to the attitude and the teaching of the Church on the subject of slavery. The testimony of the Church on this matter has always been clear and

explicit. In the year 1787 the synod of New York and Philadelphia "highly approved of the general principles in favor of universal liberty that prevail in America, and the interest which many of the States had taken in promoting the abolition of slavery," and "recommended to all their people to use the most prudent measures, consistent with the interest and the state of civil society in the counties where they lived, to procure eventually the final abolition of slavery in America." This action was reaffirmed in 1793. In the year 1815 the General Assembly "declared their cordial approbation of those principles of civil liberty which appear to be recognized by the federal and State governments in these United States," and urged the presbyteries under their care "to adopt such measures as will secure at least to the rising generation of slaves within the bounds of the Church a religious education, that they may be prepared for the exercise and enjoyment of liberty when God in his providence may open a door for their emancipation," and the same Assembly denounced "the buying and selling of slaves by way of traffic, and all undue severity in the management of them, as inconsistent with the spirit of the gospel."

The immortal paper upon the subject which was adopted by the General Assembly in the year 1818 begins with these ringing words: "We

consider the voluntary enslaving of one portion of the human race by another as a gross violation of the most precious and sacred rights of human nature, as utterly inconsistent with the law of God which requires us to love our neighbor as ourselves, and as totally irreconcilable with the spirit and principles of the gospel of Christ, which enjoins that 'all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them;'" and the entire paper is in the tone and spirit of its initial sentence. The action of 1845 deals with the single and specific question as to whether slave-holding *per se* and "without regard to circumstances is a sin and a bar to Christian communion;" and that action did not in any way or to any extent nullify or invalidate the former deliverances of the Church courts on the subject. The General Assembly of 1846 declared that in its judgment the action of the General Assembly of 1845 was not intended to deny or to rescind the testimony often uttered by the General Assembly previous to that date. Upon the deliverance of 1818 the Church as a body has always stood. To have abandoned that ground would at any time have rent the Church in twain.

Up to the time of the division the united Church occupied that ground. After the division in 1837, the utterances of the New School Church on the subject grew clearer and sharper every

year. During the same time the Old School Church, while she was not aggressive on the subject, but for the sake of peace and charity was conservative, yet stood firmly by her past testimonies, so that even during the civil war and after the abolition of slavery she had not to change a sentence or a letter in her record, nor to adjust in the slightest her attitude so as to put herself in line and sympathy with the moral forces of the times. While the General Assembly thus held the ground of 1818, it must nevertheless be confessed that a rapid change of sentiment was going on in the Southern portion of the Church, until finally the bold position was assumed that slavery as an institution was right politically and morally, and as such was to be defended and conserved, but the Church as a Church never held nor sanctioned such views. The spirit of both the Old and the New School Churches was to bear unequivocal testimony against the system of slavery as an institution, and yet at the same time to exercise the largest charity toward those who, through no fault of their own, were involved in the evils of that system. If, therefore, the Church committed an error, the error was on the side of charity; and if there were those who proved recreant to her testimonies and who abused the "charity that hopeth all things," the fault was theirs, not hers. Whatever may have been

the errors of individual members or of portions of her communion, I am bold and proud to say that there is nothing in her records on the subject of slavery of which she need be ashamed or for which she need offer an apology.

Amidst the fearful throes of rebellion both Churches were in full sympathy with the government in its efforts to restore order and to preserve the integrity of the nation, making their voices heard and their influence felt in favor of supporting the "powers that be as ordained of God," and both Churches rejoiced and sang hallelujahs when, in the providence of God, slavery, the cause of the rebellion, was utterly overthrown and ground to powder. Neither, in their ardent loyalty to their country, did they forget their allegiance to their Lord, nor were they even in these perilous times derelict in carrying forward the standard of the cross.

In the suspense and danger and agony which attended the ravages of war, Christians of all denominations were drawn closer to each other. Great union associations, such as the Christian Commission, threw different Churches into contact and sympathy. This was specially the case with the Old and New School Presbyterian Churches. In the furnace of affliction their hearts were fused and mingled. They began to

look each other in the face, to take each other by the hand, and in doing so they found that their hands were warmed by the same Presbyterian blood, and that their pulses beat to the same Christian hopes and purposes. They found that they had imperceptibly come together, that they were standing on common ground, that God had been leading them by a way which they knew not.

Each Church in its own sphere and in its own way had been working out important problems under the guidance of divine Providence. In its own sphere and according to the laws of its inner life the New School Church had freed itself from alien elements and entangling alliances, and had become a homogeneous Presbyterian body both in doctrine and government. The Old School Church, straining her conservatism to the utmost tension, hoped and prayed that the dark and perplexing problem of slavery might be solved in peace and charity and without the stern arbitrament of the sword. But God willed otherwise. The fetters of the slave must be dissolved in blood. Standing bravely by her testimonies against slavery and bearing her witness against treason and rebellion, the Old School Church calmly awaited the decisive events of Providence; and when the schism of the Southern Church came, taking from out her

pale the slavery issue, she felt herself relieved of a weight which had grievously beset her for years.

Thus God in his wise and mysterious providence had settled the issues between the two Churches. All that was left was for them to acknowledge and accept what God had done. The union of the two bodies was consummated on November 12, 1869, in the city of Pittsburg, Pa., and the two Churches became organically one on the basis of the standards, pure and simple, and under the title of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, forming, as we trust, a true Church of Christ, whose uplifted banners shall become a rallying-point for all Presbyterians on the continent, where they may meet and settle all differences in a way which will be honorable to all parties, where the scattered Presbyterian tribes may flow together as the tribes of old Israel poured to Zion, and shall become one, and shall be to all the world the best representative of a true unity which is not formed by external appliances, as though bound by hoops of steel, but a unity which is developed and strengthened by a conscious and intelligent oneness of intellectual belief and spiritual life—one not as a wired skeleton is one, but as a living man is one; a broad Church not in the sense of being latitudinarian, but broad in Christian

sympathy and in the worldwide scope of Christian effort.

Since the reunion the progress of the Church has been steady, harmonious and rapid. With past alienations, feuds and bitternesses buried utterly out of sight and out of hearing, united, hopeful and "strong in the Lord," bound by indissoluble ties of brotherhood and fellowship to those of our own household of faith, and with ardent and ample charity for all others, we stand on the threshold of the new century, and with devout thanksgiving to God for the past and for the present we hail and welcome the great future.

Such is the past. Its perils, its toils, its journeyings, its disasters, its achievements, its conflicts, its discouragements, its declensions, its revivals, its mighty sermons, its high debates, its struggles, its privations, its sacrifices, its rewards, its failures, its successes, its hopes, its disappointments, its divisions, its reunions, its unheralded and unrequited labors,—have all gone into their place, and have performed their part in fulfilling the purpose of God toward this land and the world. They form a picture of surpassing interest—a picture strong in blended light and shadow, but having withal much more of light than of shadow. We have good reason to be proud of our Presbyterian ancestry, for what

they were, for what they achieved and for what they represented. We have a glorious heraldry, but we must not rest in these.

The great Roman satirist lashes with whips of scorpions the degenerate sons of the Curii and the Lepidi, who with dice and wine and soft voluptuousness melted away their dissolute lives in the statued halls of illustrious ancestors, where every tablet groaned with a wealth of genealogical lore and every wreath and chaplet was redolent with glorious memories. Let us be careful that we incur not such satire. We have been sitting beneath our genealogical tree and rejoicing in its staunch branches and in its capacious shade. We have been gathering up the articulate lessons and the solemn, inspiring voices of the century that is gone. Let these lessons and voices only quicken us to read aright the signs of the times, and to hear and to interpret rightly the voice of God as it comes to us in his word and his providence, that through watching and prayer, through faithfulness and self-sacrifice, the present may not be a lie and a slander on the past, but that it may be a consistent opening and preparation for a brighter and grander future.

THE PRESENT CONDITION,

PROSPECTS, BENEFICENT WORK, NEEDS AND OBLIGATIONS

OF THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

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THE

PRESENT CONDITION, PROSPECTS, BENEFICENT WORK, NEEDS AND OBLIGATIONS

OF THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

IN our act of commemoration we are now brought to an inquiry into the present condition, prospects, beneficent work, needs and obligations of the Presbyterian Church. In the prosecution of this inquiry it will be convenient to give the largest place to the present condition of the Church. From that the transition will be easy to the other topics.

I. The strictly evangelical character of the Church is the most obvious sign of its present condition. Our Confession and Catechisms express gospel truths in the plainest terms. The Church is evangelical in its accepted doctrine not only, but in its aims and spirit as well. No ministry in Christendom is more thorough and urgent than ours in expounding the plan of sal-

vation. No body of believers is more importunate in prayer for revivals of religion, and none labors more diligently to secure the best fruits of revivals in the life of God's people and the conversion of sinners.

Our evangelizing has continually widened the sphere of its activity. From the beginning this Church has been a missionary society. In the year 1707 our first presbytery, then in the second year of its existence, ordered its ministers "to supply neighboring destitute places." In 1756 the synod of New York established missions among the Indians. The twelfth General Assembly, met in the year 1800, marked out for the Church its permanent plans for the spread of the gospel. That assembly, to use its own language, "agreed that the following objects deserve consideration:" first, "the gospelizing" of the Indians; second, "the instruction of the negroes, the poor and those who are destitute of the means of grace in various parts of this extensive country;" third, the distribution of the Bible and religious books; fourth, the support of candidates for the ministry; fifth, the theological instruction of the candidates by "professors of theology;" these professors to be provided with "a suitable library" and "to receive a small salary." Perhaps the brethren who were met in that assembly seventy-six years

ago built better than they knew, but the remarkable fact is that we can distinctly trace in that minute the foundation of our present Boards of Foreign Missions, Home Missions, Publication and Education, and of our theological seminaries. And another fact is not less noteworthy: the Church, after having multiplied its boards and committees beyond the number of four, proposed in 1800, is now inquiring whether it would not be wise to return to that original plan. Nor have we, in the organization of our theological seminaries, exceeded unreasonably the rule of a "suitable library" and "a small salary" for the professors.

These institutions were intended to be, and now are, simply agencies and organs of evangelism. We close this period with all in complete working order, every one of them controlled by the authority of the Church, invigorated by its life, directed always and altogether and unalterably to this one end, the "gospelizing" of the world. Whatever enters into the idea of an evangelizing Church plainly appears in our present condition.

This Church is moreover a witness-bearer. If it be allowable to reduce the highest offices of the gospel Church to the number of two or three only, one of them would be its office as a witness to the truth. Our Lord said to Pilate, "For this cause

was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth." He required his disciples to be witnesses unto him unto the uttermost parts of the earth. On the day of Pentecost and afterward they declared that Christ had risen from the dead, whereof, they added, "we all are witnesses." The holy men and women who laid down their lives for Christ's sake and the gospel's are called μαρτυρες (*martyres*), the martyr being simply a witness who uttered his testimony amidst the torments of a violent death. In the awful vision of the fifth seal, John saw under the altar the souls, and heard the loud cry, of them that were slain for the word of God and the testimony which they held. Now, this Church is not only an evangelizing but a witnessing brotherhood.

Let us then look into the form and substance of our testimony.

First, it takes on the creed form. Our system of doctrine is set forth in a Confession of Faith and in two separate Catechisms. Every part of these documents having been reduced to writing and printed, nothing is left to be settled by any gloss or tradition written or unwritten, and nothing is to be received as of ecclesiastical authority, neither explanation nor caveat, except it be found in the text.

Further, this testimony covers the whole field

of Christian doctrine. The Confession is drawn out into thirty-three chapters, subdivided into about one hundred and seventy sections. The Larger Catechism contains extended answers to one hundred and ninety-six questions. The Shorter Catechism, though striving after brevity, is not content until it has proposed one hundred and seven definitions. It would be difficult for an inquirer, even the most thorough and searching, to ask a fair question in Christian doctrine which is not fairly met in these formularies.

In regard to the system of doctrine set out in our standards, we may adopt a well-known classification, suggested, perhaps, by Dr. Hodge. (*Princeton Review*, 1858, p. 689.)

We begin with the body of truth which we hold in common with all the great historical Churches bearing the Christian name, including the Greek and Roman communions. With them we testify to the doctrines of the Holy Trinity, of the person of Christ, and to some of the vital points in the mediatorial work of the Son of God. Next, bearing with us these testimonies, we leave the communions of the Greek and Roman Churches, and pass into the company of the evangelical Protestants, whether they be Lutherans or Arminians or German Reformed. We unite with them in constantly maintaining the truths which we must know in order to be saved

—truths broader than the borders of any one denomination, truths which stand the old test of catholicity, being received everywhere and always and by all.

Bearing with us these sacred treasures, we pass over into a narrower fellowship, even unto the believers who accept the Calvinistic theology. This form of doctrine is held within compass of the five points, and they project so sharply from our standards that nobody can doubt their presence. They are the distinctive peculiarities of our written testimony.

With this agrees the constant witness-bearing of the living Church. This system of doctrine is diligently taught in our families and Sabbath-schools and pulpits. It is the outstanding sum and substance of our most approved treatises on theology. Very few men come into the ministry except through the lecture-rooms of our theological seminaries; and in every one of them the teachers have solemnly adopted, as the confession of their personal faith, this system of doctrine. We require every man who bears office in the Church to receive and adopt it as his own by a public subscription. No man can become a minister or ruling elder or deacon, nor can he be admitted to a seat in the church court, in any other way; and every man is subject to be deprived of office so soon as he renounces this be-

lief. It may be confidently asserted that the testimony of the living Church is at one with the testimony of the written formularies.

And to make all things sure, the doctrinal matter printed in the symbolical books and preached and taught by the living Church takes a double form—the form at once of a testimony and a protest. Standing in certain vital doctrines with the Greek and Roman Churches, we protest against Atheism and Pantheism and Materialism, with their swarming and pestilent heresies. With all our Protestant brethren we protest against Romanism and Rationalism; and with the Reformed Churches we remonstrate with the "Remonstrants." Our doctrinal position is first didactic, then polemic, very faintly irenic. Calvinism is the distinctive peculiarity of our system. If that were eliminated or suppressed or abandoned, either in the written standards or in the inward convictions of the people, this Church would have no right to an existence on earth. In that event it would be a schism, not a necessity, in the kingdom. Over and above what truths are well set forth by other communions, our Church, Calvinism being eliminated from the creed, would represent nothing imperial either in divine revelation or in the forms of human thought.

Let it not be thought, however, that the Con-

fession is our rule of faith. Neither is it the judge by which controversies are to be determined, nor the infallible interpreter of God's written word. The rule of faith is the Holy Scripture alone. The supreme judge of controversies, in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other than the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures; and the infallible interpreter of Scripture is the Scripture itself. We acknowledge always the supreme authority of the written word. That word is the touchstone of all that we preach and all that we print, the rule by which we judge our catechisms and confessions, and with which we require our prayers and hymns, our sermons and treatises in theology, to be conformed. Our creed is simply a human covenant wherein we declare that, to the best of our knowledge, the doctrinal matter therein contained is the system set forth in the rule of faith, and that the language is sufficient in which the doctrine is expressed. It will easily be admitted that the compilers of the creed may have erred in some things through the frailty inseparable from humanity; but we profess and say that we are not able to detect the possible error.

The full assurance with which we rest upon our standards is strengthened by the known processes of their formation. The history of the

Westminster books is the history of theology, and theology is the growth of ages. Many centuries following the ministry of the apostles were required in order to gather from the Scriptures the true doctrine of the Trinity and the person of Christ, and to select the words and to frame the definitions which should express the mind of the Spirit. After that was done, the truths concerning man and the way of salvation were slowly and painfully ascertained. In the period of the Reformation the Protestant Churches combined all these separate truths into a multitude of creed-forms. But they were tentative only, not final. At last the Westminster Assembly, profiting by the labors of those that had gone before, gave to the Church the latest and most complete confession of its faith. This document not only summed up all the existing knowledge of God's word, but it was the consummate product of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the Protestant Reformation, the second Pentecost of the Gentiles, and up to our own day the last of all. We judge that if the prophets and teachers at Antioch at the end of the first century had read the text of Scripture aright, they would have done the work that was reserved for the divines at Westminster in the middle of the seventeenth century. Even so if Ptolemy had been able to follow the paths of the planets,

rightly dividing between their true and their apparent motions, he would have set forth the astronomy of to-day. The ordinances of the heavens are not more unchangeable than the word of God. The Bible, no less than the heavens, reveals the thoughts of God. Both waited for their interpreters. The interpreters came at last, and a true astronomy and a true theology stood revealed.

In the formation of these formularies, first of all the Holy Scripture was received as undoubtedly a supernatural revelation, both in the substance and in the written record thereof—an infallible record of an infallible revelation. The truths contained in the record were gathered, one by one, out of the obvious and historical sense of the inspired text. Next, the truths so ascertained were embodied in language chosen by the living Church to express its own best understanding of the written word. The most important words were weighed, word by word; one taken, another left. Many of them had been coined in the heat of early controversies with unbelievers, and are current through every province of Christ's kingdom on earth. Of these, the terms used in the Confession to describe the person of Christ are fine examples. Extraordinary precision was given to its clauses and terms. Many words were keenly set to detect or to defy

latent error. Of these the phrase "elect infants" may serve as an example. Further still, these definitions were pursued to their unavoidable conclusions, and the conclusions were tried by the word of God. Then, again, they were laid side by side for the detection of incompatibilities, if any lurked among them. To what extent they appeared to contradict or modify one another was carefully considered. Finally, the statements so wrought out one by one, tested by the written word one by one, compared every one with every other one, were combined into coherent and logical formularies. In all their labors the compilers gave themselves continually to prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. And if the history and traditions which have come down to us of many remarkable answers to prayer may be accepted, they received special divine illumination in some of their most important conferences.

These documents have been in the hands of Christian scholars, and of the skeptical critics and philosophers as well, unto this day. They have passed under the scrutiny of men skilled in the interpretation of the Scriptures; linguists most facile in the use of verbal signs, keen in the detection of fallacies and contradictions; scientific observers able to grasp and weigh truth in the system of doctrine. They have endured

every ordeal proposed by doubters and debaters. They have encountered the merciless hostility which time and talents wage upon every human composition, and they have held their own more than two hundred years. Never before was the number of their disciples so great as it is in our own time; and believers in them are multiplied daily.

Since the formation of the General Assembly in 1789, these symbols have been preserved unchanged. They have suffered no loss in the emergencies of our church-life. In the memorable division of 1837 both parties avowed their loyalty to our common standards. Through the thirty-three years which followed, both branches of the Church preserved these standards in the *ipsissimis verbis* thereof. At the reunion both branches agreed to give no sanction to the "various modes of viewing, stating, explaining and illustrating the doctrines of the Confession," and the Church bound itself anew to the standards, "pure and simple." We are entitled to say that there is in the reunited Church an extraordinary unanimity in upholding our system of doctrine. The Church which now is commits to the Church of the future its ancient covenanted creed in its original integrity, with the judgment, well nigh unanimous, that it ought *not to be abandoned or revised, or even reconsidered.*

It should be distinctly borne in mind that this Church does not make the adoption of the Confession of Faith a condition of church membership. It is imposed only on those who are ordained to bear office in the Church, according to the plain distinction between the communion of saints and the position of the teacher and ruler.

Still further, it should not be forgotten that over and above "the system of doctrine," strictly so called, our standards contain certain definitions which are not integral parts of that system. In our ordination vows as office-bearers we do not make ourselves responsible for these outside deliverances. Hugh Miller expressed to Dr. Candlish the opinion that "the Confessions and Catechisms of the Westminster divines, in treating of the subject of the creation, use language which cannot in any way be harmonized with the teachings of science." He then pointed out, in contrast, the narrative of the creation in the book of Genesis, the inspired text of which is fairly susceptible of an interpretation consistent with the geological discoveries. The definitions of our standards on this subject, whether they be true or erroneous, have nothing to do with the "system of doctrine" to which we subscribe. In like manner, we may not be able to adopt, as of clear scriptural warrant, every clause in the chapters of the Confession "of the civil magistrate" and

"of marriage and divorce." We do not question any point in the Calvinistic theology if we doubt whether the inspired text of Paul to Timothy respecting "that man of sin, that son of perdition," is rightly interpreted when applied to the pope of Rome. None of these propositions are parts of our system of doctrine. They are not imposed upon our consciences in the act of ordination. If it be said that this rule of subscription opens the door to the rejection of essential truth, the answer is that it belongs to the living Church, through its tribunals, to determine for itself, and for us all, what definitions are integral parts of the system of doctrine; and that determination is final and binding on everybody.

Another prominent feature in the condition of this Church is to be recognized in its well-tried and thoroughly settled way of government, discipline and worship. That our Church polity carries with it the warrant of Scripture ought not to be doubted. The Westminster Assembly began its labors with these propositions: "Christ hath appointed a definite form of government for his Church, and has not left it to the wisdom and caprice of men;" and "the doctrine, worship and government of the house of God are to be taken from God's word alone." The divines, having ascertained that the pattern of church order is shown in the Scriptures, gave the same diligence

in deducing the divinely-appointed polity that they gave in deducing the divinely-revealed doctrine. They expressed their sense of the mind of the Spirit in the Presbyterian system of government and worship. That is the sense of the living Church as well. Many of us subscribe to the opinion of the "London ministers" that "Presbyterianism may lay the only lawful claim to a divine right according to the Scriptures." Very few among us are in any doubt whether the fundamental principles of this polity are laid in the Scriptures, even though some would say that the minuter details are left to the discretion of the Church.

The lapse of a century has added nothing to the divine authority of our church order. But the history of this period has enriched us with the experience of its practical wisdom. We have before us the actual workings of the system in conditions very peculiar. On the third Thursday of May, 1789, the whole Church met for the first time in General Assembly, making complete its organization. Since that time the population of the country has risen from four millions to more than forty millions. The inhabited territory, then "a mere patch on the earth's surface," has expanded to continental dimensions. The ministers of this Church, then one hundred and seventy-seven in number, now exceed

four thousand seven hundred; the four hundred and twenty congregations have multiplied to five thousand. As late as the year 1810 our communicants numbered less than twenty-nine thousand; now they exceed five hundred and thirty-five thousand. And if we may take the Southern Presbyterian Church into this account, we must add to these numbers nearly one thousand ministers, eighteen hundred and twenty churches, and one hundred and twelve thousand one hundred and eighty-three communicants.

In the course of this numerical and territorial expansion several problems of Church policy have been well solved.

For the first of these, it has been demonstrated that Presbyterianism best fulfills all its offices as a gospel Church when wholly separated from the State, indebted for no patronage and owing no organic or even formal allegiance to the civil power. This Church began its bold experiment of self-support and self-government by removing from the Westminster Confession all the definitions which gave the civil magistrate any authority over the Church in matters purely ecclesiastical. Having thus settled the true sense of God's word in that particular, it cast the whole support of the gospel, with the duty of spreading the same, upon the voluntary contributions of the people. Touching the success of these measures, this only need

be said: Our example is one of the forces which is likely to disestablish and disendow the mother-Kirk itself.

Another and more complicated problem has been solved. It is now an assured fact that Presbyterianism has the adaptability and strength to grapple with difficulties unknown to its older home in the British islands. These difficulties arose from the vastness of our territory; from the contact of the white and black races; from African slavery; from the endless migrations of our people toward the West and the South; from the swarms of emigrants, distracting our modes of life with their discordant tongues and religions and customs and prejudices; from the alienations which grow out of diverse climates and soils and labor systems; from an intense sectionalism and sectarianism. The sufficiency of Presbyterianism in the midst of these complications is assured. And its sufficiency is not accidental; it resides in the integral elements of its polity. Let us trace its actual workings.

Our form of government recognizes the office of the evangelist. He is a minister "ordained to preach the gospel, administer sealing ordinances and organize churches in frontier or destitute settlements." He takes with him those sacred functions to Nevada, let us say, or to Idaho or to the regions beyond, to us known or unknown.

So soon as a congregation is gathered—and for a gospel church three make a quorum—and so soon as ruling elders are ordained, a church-court springs into being, clothed with the power of the whole Presbyterian Church in the admission of the believer to sealing ordinances. The power of the kingdom to bind and to loose is there in the keeping of that church-session. Other congregations, let us say, are formed in those regions, and then a presbytery is created, with the whole power of the Church in ordaining ministers and ordering the affairs of the several congregations. In whatever far-off region there are in existence the two primary judicatories, the session and the presbytery, the lowest in supremacy, but the highest, perhaps, in sacred functions, there is the Presbyterian Church. The congregation at Deer Lodge, in the Rocky Mountains, reports only fifteen members. The Presbytery of Montana, to which it belongs, reports three ministers, four churches and one hundred and one communicants, all told. But that congregation and its presbytery are, in respect to the power of the keys, the equal, each to each, of the most important congregation and of the largest presbytery in the land. And if a pastor is an "angel," in the sense of the Epistles to the seven churches in Asia, the minister of Deer Lodge is the peer of any angel of the Church in Philadelphia. And

finally, the organic union of all the churches, near and far away, in one General Assembly completes for us a way of government which unites indefinite expansion with undiminished strength. The church-life that is in us is no less vital in the compass of a continent than within the limits of a single city; even as the Atlantic cable carries its messages from end to end not less faithfully whether it be coiled up in the hold of the Great Eastern or whether it be stretched from the Old World to the New.

A third problem which has been solved relates to the development in the body of the Church of its organs for spreading the gospel. The first General Assembly found the Church without actual equipment. The congregations were there, so were the ministries of teaching, of rule and of distribution. The standards of doctrine and government and worship were set up, and the four spiritual courts were organized under a wise distribution of spiritual powers. Gradually, step by step, the various boards and committees were raised by the General Assembly through which the Church might do its work. The remarkable fact is that the Church was able to endure, or at least to recover from, the strain that was put upon it by this remarkable growth and expansion from within. We have now reached undivided convictions in respect to this

whole subject. We are unanimously and heartily agreed in the opinion that to the Church, as such, and to its tribunals, Christ has committed the whole work of evangelizing the world. It needs for this purpose no new class of office-bearers, no new agencies for the raising of funds, no new societies for the control or oversight of missions, home and foreign, of education, of church-erection, of sustentation, of publication, or of any other department. It is one of the assured facts in our condition—most cheering as well—that we go forth to our future labors with united counsels, and with perfect confidence that we are doing the Lord's work in the Lord's own way. That way was laid in the organic law of the Church, not by any human prescience or half foreknowledge, but by the Master himself. And the Master has led us all to walk in that path hand in hand, together, with footsteps not unequal. And now we transmit to those who come after us the form of government substantially unchanged, even as we received the same from the Fathers. Its features have been preserved. The parity of ministry; the office of the ruling elder and deacon; the election of all office-bearers by the free vote of the people; the sole power of the ministry in the administration of sealing ordinances; the joint and equal power of the keys invested in the ministry and the

eldership; the government of the Church by tribunals, every one of them—session, presbytery, synod, general assembly—composed of two classes of office-bearers, the minister and the ruling elder—the same in every court and none others in any; spiritual power everywhere asserted, but everywhere limited by a written constitution; popular rights judicially guarded—the greatest among us amenable to his brethren and the humblest protected by the whole power of the Church; the complete independence of the Church on the State—these principles of church-order are rooted in the way of government now transmitted from centennial to centennial.

II. From the present condition of the Church the transition is natural to its prospects. In respect to these we may apply to ourselves the remarkable saying of Paul: "A wide and effectual door is opened unto us, and there are many adversaries." The apostle appears to have gathered courage from the presence of his adversaries, as well as hope from the opening of the wide and effectual door. Let us stand face to face with the obstacles which may oppose themselves to the work set before us.

The most formidable of these obstacles stand in the way, not of our own denomination alone, but of the whole Church of God. They do not

arise from controversies among the various evangelical denominations which dwell side by side. The doctrinal position of every leading Church is settled; its way of order and worship is settled; its methods of Christian work are settled. Much controversy on these subjects is seen to be superfluous. Meanwhile, a zeal for church extension has taken possession of us all. By a common impulse, if not a common agreement, the strength of all true believers is expended upon the unsaved people at home and in the heathen lands. Our contention now is for the foremost place and severest labors in the "gospelizing" of the nations.

The difficulties with which we must grapple are partly from without—from the unbelieving world—and they are of modern origin. The gospel is in no peril from Jewish legalism—that was finished with the age of the apostles; nor from a persecuting idolatry—that ceased at the accession of Constantine; nor from the deadly embrace of imperialism—that was gradually loosened among the successors of Constantine; nor from the apostasies of the Middle Ages—these were renounced at the Reformation; nor from the encroachments of the civil power and prelatical authority—these have been repelled. But the enemy which we are now to confront is en-

trenched in the bosom of a splendid material civilization. The instruments and forces of this new life of Christendom are now gathered together in Philadelphia. They are wonderful in number and variety in every department of industry; in machinery, agriculture, commerce, mining, handicraft, and in the arts, useful and ornamental. No one man's understanding is broad enough to comprehend this exhibition. Eye, ear, brain and limb are fatigued with the brilliant, noisy, various, vast display.

Now, in the accumulation of wealth and the growth of culture under the influence of this superb material civilization, our people are finding satisfaction in the things that are seen. The realities of the world to come are intended to awaken our sense of wonder, but the wonders of this world shut out those unseen wonders. The inward thought is that the invisible and supernatural can have nothing to reveal equal to the visible and the natural. A sort of positivism in its most hurtful form is taking root among us. It is the religion of the five senses and of the intellect and of the natural sensibilities. The cultivated men and women are finding a religion satisfactory to themselves in natural science and its brilliant discoveries, in music, painting and architecture. They prefer the lecture-room, the industrial exhibition, experimental chemistry,

astronomy, microscopy, and the spectrum analysis to the house of worship.

Still further, this material civilization falls in with the latest form of materialistic unbelief. The Corliss engine furnishes the positivist with a fresh illustration of force. "Here," he exclaims, "is force indeed—force all but irresistible. This at last solves the problem of the great first cause: Force is God." Or he examines the motion expressed by the engine, its revolutions, almost astronomical in their majesty and energy, its forces, projected into every conceivable direction, upward, downward, transverse, forward, reversed, circular, eccentric, here swift, there slow. He is quick to say that Motion, added to Force, is God. Or having studied out the plan and power of the machinery around him, and seen the skill with which it moulds the masses of iron and weaves the gossamer, he is ready to suggest that Thought is the master of Force and Motion; and now, let us say, Thought is God. Another positivist cuts short the debate by declaring that God is an insoluble mystery, an inscrutable problem; and another still contents himself with the dogma that the idea of a God is unthinkable.

Now, a more thorough examination of the Exhibition will show that Christianity is the parent of the forces which are changing the face of the

world. The exhibits of China and Japan, the lacquer-work and porcelain, the carving in wood and ivory, the bronzes, are wonderful, but they are the products of handicraft alone. The steam-engine, the steamship, the locomotive, the railway, the magnetic telegraph, are products of Christendom. What piece of machinery of substantial value owes its existence to the heathen mind? When the agencies of our splendid civilization are turned against the religion of the Bible, we have a repetition of the old transgression—the creature denying the creator.

This form of worldliness will beset the Church of the future. A difficulty of another kind, and arising from within, must be anticipated. Our history does not assure us that the future Church will be able to escape internal strife, leading to organic divisions. The sense of visible unity is weaker among us than the sense of individual freedom, of the liberty of private judgment, of the supremacy of conscience, and the duty of resisting what appear to be ecclesiastical misrule and oppression. From the ways of our mother-Kirk in Scotland we take a conviction of the right to go out from the Church if, in the last extremity, we find no other means of asserting sound doctrine, or scriptural church-order, or popular rights, or the supremacy of Christ's crown. The Presbyterians that come after us are not likely to be less

set in their ways than the fathers who divided the old synod of Philadelphia, than the brethren of the Cumberland Presbytery in 1808, than the Presbyterians of 1837 and 1861. To borrow an illustration from the recent controversy respecting sin and free-agency, schism seems to be incidental, like friction in machinery, to the best possible form of Presbyterianism. But, still further, it is an assured fact of the future Church, if it follows the old paths, that its schisms will be healed one by one, except in cases where a certain diversity in doctrine or church-order has been established. The rule of healing, making the divided Church every whit whole, appears in the reunions of 1758 and of 1870. The exception appears in the separate existence of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church through a period of now nearly seventy years. But another lesson from the past teaches us that the healing has not been effected in the immediate generation that received the wound. The division of 1741 continued seventeen years, that of 1837 continued thirty-two years, that of 1861 continues to this day. So long as our ancient liberties of thought and speech are preserved there is likely to arise diversity of opinion, to be followed in extreme cases by discussion, then debate, then eager controversy, then conflicting protests and testimonies, then organic division. So long as the standards

of the Church are upheld by the sundered portions, the question of the ultimate healing of the breach need awaken no anxiety. History, in the long run, is likely to repeat itself.

III. Another topic assigned to this discourse is the beneficent work of the Church. Here we come upon the legacy which we bequeath to our children. We transfer to them a gospel Church—a Church whose aim it is to evangelize the world. The plans of the work at home and abroad have been laid. At home we are endeavoring, with our brethren of other communions, to possess the whole land. Our simple plan for the work abroad is to plant the Church, just as it is, in the bosom of the outlying nations. We propose to preach the pure gospel to the heathen; to translate into their languages the Holy Scripture as the rule of faith, and our standards as a sound exposition of that rule; to establish for their children schools of godly learning; to set up the printing press, and, if we may so say, bestow upon it the gift of tongues; to gather the converts into Presbyterian congregations and the congregations into presbyteries and synods, taking care that they and we shall all be compacted in one General Assembly: many peoples, one communion; many languages, one testimony; many kindred, one household of faith,—multiplying the people and increasing the joy. This great

work and its appointments and instruments are now turned over to the future Church.

In defining our beneficent work we should not overlook our duties to the poor and the diseased and the suffering.

In all the world before the Christian era there was no hospital for the sick or the deaf or the blind or the insane. There is no trace whatever of such institutions either in the history, or in the monuments, or in the ruins of any rude or classic pagan empire. The most copious language of antiquity contains no word or phrase equivalent to the word "hospital." In Bethlehem of Judea in the fourth century, under the pastoral care of Jerome, a noble lady of the Fabian family instituted the first hospital, and Jerome coined a Greek work to designate the charity. The suggestive combinations here are the place, Bethlehem; the founder, a christian woman; and the patron, the translator of the Scriptures,—all associated in the original evolution of the gospel idea of relief for the suffering. That is undoubtedly an integral part of the gospel. Christ healed all that were sick of divers diseases. That is not all: he healed the sick on the Sabbath day. More than that, he healed them in the midst of the worship of the synagogue. More than that, even: after he had cleansed the temple, vindicating the sacredness of the place,

immediately "the blind and the lame came to him in the temple and he healed them."

In these works the Master plainly pointed out the connection between the relief of human suffering and his own divine mission, his own holy day and the holiest habitation on earth, even the temple first purified from the defilement of the world, and then consecrated anew by his healing mercies.

Here is an example with a duty set before our Church, to the fullness of which we have not yet attained. Nobody is insensible to the advantages which the Church of Rome has gained by combining its almost boundless charities with its creed and worship. In spite of its errors and corruption and spiritual despotism, its churches still grow and prosper, even in this Protestant country, largely through its hospitals and asylums and nursing fathers and sisters of charity.

It takes care to identify its beneficence with its worship and spiritual authority. In one of the largest hospitals in Europe the wards radiate from a common centre, like the spokes of a wheel. In the centre stands the altar with its sacred furniture and officiating priest. You shall see the sick in all directions lifting up their heads wearily from their pillows to gaze upon the altar, according to the analogy of the brazen serpent, and the convalescents drawing near as

best they can to kneel and worship. Rome everywhere connects healing with her faith and priesthood. It will be a memorable day for this Church when we shall take the hint from Rome, or rather from the example of Christ. The work is nobly begun in the Presbyterian hospitals of Philadelphia and New York, and in orphan asylums and infirmaries greatly multiplied in our larger congregations. And what is not less cheering, our missionary physicians in heathen lands are following the example of Philip in his first visit to Samaria. He went down thither and preached Christ. "The people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, seeing and hearing the miracles which he did. For unseen spirits, crying with loud voices, came out of many that were possessed with them; and many taken with palsies and that were lame were healed. *And there was great joy in that city.*" It is reserved for the future Church to fill up the compassions of Christ, to build infirmaries for the sick, homes for the aged, to set up the house of mercy—the *Hotel Dieu*—side by side with the house of prayer, to lay the corner stones of both in the name of the blessed Trinity, blending the office of charity with the office of salvation.

IV. One word in regard to the needs and obligations of the Church. These connect them-

selves with its external prosperity. If there be strength in a divinely-ordained and well-settled creed and way of government, in territorial expansion, in swelling numbers, in growing wealth, in knowledge and culture, in schools of both common and higher learning, secular and sacred, in the tried instruments of our work,—then this is a strong Church. If there be strength in the relations which our history sustains to the history and best traditions of the nation in the great emergencies of its colonial and revolutionary and constitutional periods, then we are strong. If strength abides, always unbroken and invincible, in the millions of the middle classes, from which, by the favor of God, our congregations are mainly gathered, then again we are strong. If there be strength in a high vantage-ground amidst the historical Churches around us, sparing much treasure in men and money to them, and yet ourselves not impoverished by what we give, then again we are strong —in all these conditions stronger than any Presbyterian communion on earth.

But, brethren, we will not forget that the abiding strength of a gospel Church flows from the person of Christ. Self-denial is power, zeal for the truth is power, love for souls is power. The exclusion of boasting, the crucifixion of self-seeking, the stamping out of church-pride, are

elements of power. From the presence of Christ proceed these gifts and graces. He will teach us our obligations, he will supply our needs. His is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever.

AMERICAN PRESBYTERIANISM:

ITS PAST AND ITS FUTURE.

THE MODERATOR'S SERMON BEFORE THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF 1876.

BY THE

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American Presbyterianism:

its past and its future.

"In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them and carried them all the days of old." Isa. lxiii. 9.

"Walk ye round about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces: that ye may tell it to the generation following. For this God is our God for ever and ever." Ps. xlviii. 12–14.

FATHERS and brethren: Officially assembled in this holy place to review the divine goodness toward our beloved Church in the past, to consider the evidences and the sources of her present prosperity, and to confirm our faith in the presence and blessing of God through coming time, we may fitly make these two passages of Scripture the basis and the substance of our joint meditations. The first will be recognized as a psalm of commemoration, celebrating in beautiful imagery the historic grace of Jehovah toward his ancient Church and people. The second is a hymn of joy and hope, inspired by a survey of the present strength and beauty of that Church, and by firm confidence in her pre-

dicted and glorious future. In their combination they forcibly suggest the cardinal lesson that the Church, in all ages and of whatever name, enjoys in a special sense the divine nurture and protection; they reveal our God as the God of his people for ever and ever.

The ecclesiastical year just closing has been marked by many illustrations of this truth. In the prevalent peace and concord, in the abounding manifestations of loyalty to our type of faith and order, in the measure of growth and progress, in the increase of our ministry, in the vigorous prosecution of our denominational work at home and abroad, and especially in the reviving of religion in so many of our churches, we have tangible proofs that the angel of the divine Presence has been with us, and has carried and folded us in his love. The promise of the opening year is also full, rich, abundant. In the midst of financial depression and of political agitations the faith and courage and devotion of our people are not declining. Our denominational enterprises are moving forward with scarcely diminished energy. Activity and consecration still characterize our ministry. Precious revivals are yet in progress, and our churches are rejoicing in numerous accessions, and in the bloom and fragrance of a ripening spiritual life. In such favoring circumstances, does it not at this sacred

hour become our foremost duty to appropriate the joyous language of psalmist and of prophet, and to celebrate with them the goodness and grace of Him who is the Shepherd of Israel through all generations?

Contemplating the career and condition and prospects of our Church on a broader scale, how much more urgent becomes the occasion for such psalms of commemoration, such hymns of joy and of hope! In this historic year in our national life our minds are naturally led to review with fresh interest the two centuries, nearly, of our denominational existence on this continent, and to trace the good hand of our God upon us from age to age. It is natural also to note the vivid contrast between the earlier feebleness, the labors and conflicts, the toilsome development of the past, and the mingled strength and beauty of our present Zion, fortified with the bulwarks of salvation and bright with palaces of grace. Nor can we refrain at such a time from looking forward into the nearer and the remoter future, and gathering up, alike from the teachings of history and the witness of Scripture, comforting hopes and assurances respecting the career of our denomination on this continent in the generations and the centuries which are to come. Oh for minds to comprehend the wonders of the divine dealing as thus both realized and promised, and

for hearts that exclaim with the psalmist, "This God who has been, who now is, shall continue to be our God for ever and for ever"!

Considered in these broader aspects, the occasion seems to prescribe a theme which commands present consideration—the past and the future of American Presbyterianism. While I realize painfully the contrast between the magnitude of this theme and the various limitations under which I must labor in discussing it, I propose on the one side to present *some pertinent suggestions respecting our denominational development* from the first planting of the seed to the present era of relative vigor and maturity; and on the other side, to indicate in general *the true line of progress for the future*, and to name some of the conditions under which such progress may be anticipated. To the topic thus somewhat vaguely announced let me solicit your thoughtful, sympathetic attention.

AMERICAN PRESBYTERIANISM IN THE PAST.

In glancing at the history of American Presbyterianism as that history shades off into the beautiful and cheering present, it will be well to note at the outset the important fact that this Presbyterianism *sprang from the British rather than the Continental stock.* Continental Presbyterianism, though starting at the Reformation as

the primary form of church organization accepted by Protestantism, and associating itself by strong and vital ties with the Calvinistic type of the Protestant doctrine, and although consequently it had the start in position, resources and opportunity, yet failed in its actual development to justify the earlier promise, and especially during the seventeenth century suffered serious deteriorations in both character and influence. State complications, national differences, theological rivalries, and especially the bitter conflict with Arminianism, to say nothing of some inherent defects in the dominant varieties of Presbyterianism itself, had conspired together to change the serene bloom of the morning into a cloudy and ominous day. But the Presbyterianism of the British Isles, and especially of Scotland, had meanwhile strengthened and improved alike in essential qualities and in ecclesiastical position; and before the middle of the seventeenth century it had secured for itself a permanent home and a commanding influence from Edinburgh to London. There was much in such a type of doctrine and order which was calculated to win and hold the British mind. Its strongly intellectual cast, its large ethical element, its sharply-defined religious experiences, its practical and efficient methods, its free and just forms of organization, and especially its clear, positive, cogent presentation of all that was most vital in

Protestantism, gave it ready entrance and won for it permanent authority. Under such favoring conditions it steadily grew and flourished, both northward and southward; and though its unwise struggles after State recognition and prestige constantly weakened its true spiritual influence, and at last in England threw it back into a secondary place between prelacy and independency, yet before the end of the century British Presbyterianism had confirmed its right to separate existence, had justified its positions on the broadest scriptural grounds, had embodied and glorified itself in the symbols of Westminster, had been established in Scotland as the national Church, and had become known throughout Europe as one of the most effective forces in current Protestantism.

From this insular stock American Presbyterianism was derived; to this British ancestry it mainly owes its existence. At the time of that primitive transplantation, independency in its two varieties already possessed New England; the Reformed Church of Holland had planted itself in the colony of New York; Catholicism of the English type had taken root in Maryland; Pennsylvania had become the chosen home of the disciples of Fox, and Virginia the domain of an authorized and influential Episcopacy. Representatives of the persecuted Presbyterianism of

France had meanwhile sought refuge in the Carolinas, and a few scattered adherents of the doctrine and order of Westminster, chiefly from Scotland and Ireland, had found homes at various points along the Atlantic from Baltimore to Boston. But it was not till the beginning of the eighteenth century, when British Presbyterians in large numbers were compelled to flee from the rigors of prelacy, and when kindred immigration from other quarters had become more extensive, and sufficient material was thus provided, that particular congregations began to be formed in Maryland and Pennsylvania, and the first presbytery was organized; and our Church, as an historic body, assumed its definite place among the denominational organisms which were henceforth to shape together the religious history of this new continent.

GENERAL CONDITIONS OF GROWTH.

As we trace the growth of the germ thus planted we discover four general conditions—conditions affecting more or less vitally all forms of American religious life—under which such growth has been attained. Of these the first in time, if not in importance, was *a gradual separation from the parent stock*, followed by a consequent development of indigenous varieties in thought, usage and experience. The Atlantic

was then a broad ocean rather than a narrow strait, and communication with the Old World was both infrequent and difficult. The young Church, finding foreign support uncertain and inadequate, was early thrown back upon its own resources and became absorbed in the task of interior development. European ideas, interpretations, usages, gradually lost authority; ancestral connections and interests grew relatively unimportant. The original British material was also rapidly modified by the intermingling of other elements, partly from Continental sources, partly from New England. And thus, even during the first period, from 1706 to 1758, a native type of Presbyterianism, fashioned largely by these new exigences and differing in some particulars from the Scotch norm, rose into shape and vigor. The struggles and alienations of the Revolution completed this process; and with the formation of the General Assembly in 1788, the American Presbyterian Church may be said to have entered fully upon its career of independent existence. Preserving sacredly the principles it had inherited, it yet held these under such limitations as were demanded by its new circumstances; losing something, doubtless, in consequence of such isolation, it also gained much that was indispensable to a truly national character and position. Receiving reverently

the Westminster symbols as the substance of belief, it still exercised its inherent right to modify these symbols so far as their teaching seemed defective. Adopting cordially the polity of the mother-churches, it still administered that polity in a spirit and in methods largely its own. No longer Scotch or Irish, Huguenot or Puritan, it thus became a Church distinctively American, under no allegiance to foreign authorities or precedents, sustaining, regulating, developing itself as freely, as independently, as the young nation with whose life and career it was so closely identified.

An entire dependence on the voluntary principle constituted another of these general conditions. During the seventeenth century no less than four State Churches substantially had been established in the American colonies: the Papal in Maryland, the Episcopal in Virginia, the Dutch in New York and the Puritan in New England. But the attempt to reproduce here, even in more spiritual forms, what had been so disastrous to the cause of Protestantism in Europe was a predestined failure; and from that failure our Church was providentially exempt. Such was its geographic position, and such were its relations to these denominations and to the colonial governments, that it was constrained from the outset to plant itself upon the voluntary

principle as distinguished from all forms of State support. That principle had, indeed, as history has shown, its limitations and its dangers; it tended strongly to emphasize theological differences, to cultivate denominational rivalries, to develop a belligerent spirit of sect, ever pregnant with mischief. But the principle itself was sound, and its adoption under the circumstances was both a logical and a practical necessity. It was an essential element in that broad conception of religious liberty which had already appeared in American thought, and which was destined to be incorporated as a cardinal truth into the very structure of American society. Under that principle the Presbyterian Church from the beginning lived and prospered, depending on no *regium donum*, asking from the State nothing but protection, and resting solely on the devotion and the labors and sacrifices of those who loved and were willing to sustain it. To the Presbyterianism of the Old World the experiment must have seemed anomalous and full of danger, but to the young Church, just rising into form and vigor, it became an experiment fraught with blessing. American Presbyterianism could never have risen to its present elevation in spirituality or fruitfulness had it not thus from the beginning cast itself irrevocably upon the doctrine that the Church of Christ rests on no civil supports, and

needs neither the endorsement nor the patronage even of the mightiest monarchs of earth.

Another general condition may be seen in *the peculiar collocation and commingling of the various American sects* in a common struggle for life and for growth. In the Old World geographic boundaries had largely kept apart not merely Romanism and Protestantism, but also the several varieties of Protestantism. Even during the sixteenth century the Church of the Reformation had broken up into a series of national or provincial churches, held together by a certain theory of oneness, but in fact widely separate, and consequently but little in conflict among themselves. In the New World, notwithstanding the original geographic distributions, each denomination gradually came to regard itself as inheriting equally with every other the entire continent, and the struggle for possession consequently became inevitable and universal. Catholicism was compelled, in fact as well as in form, to admit Protestantism into Maryland. Episcopacy was constrained to recognize the right of the faith of Westminster to propagate itself in Virginia. Even the stronghold of Puritanism was penetrated successively by the Baptist, the Presbyterian, the Methodist and the Episcopalian. Especially after the Revolution this commingling of sects, with its consequent rivalries

and struggles, became universal; and those churches which earliest recognized the new condition and began to extend their borders, not merely westward along the same latitude, but also northward and southward, upward and downward, among all classes and grades of American society, were those which grew most rapidly and earliest attained a commanding position. Into that struggle for continental influence the Presbyterian Church entered with great earnestness. Claiming exclusive possession nowhere, it claimed joint possession everywhere. Fired with missionary zeal as well as by loyalty to its special doctrine and order, it aspired to become, in the best sense, a national Church—a Church for the American people. Joining with other sects in the common work of evangelism, it still lifted high its own blue banner, and welcomed to its standard all, of whatever class, who preferred at heart the Presbyterian name; and while this mingling and collision of sects sometimes resulted in sectarian propagandism, it cannot be questioned that the main result has been one of blessing. This is especially true of our own Church. In the exposition of its theological system, in the administration of its polity, in the temper and purpose that have animated it, and especially in the remarkable energy and efficiency that have characterized its

life, that Church has been the better, stronger, purer, for this providential experience.

Leaving this truth to confirm itself, we may further note a fourth general condition—*the universal liberty of thought and of speech* recognized as a fundamental principle in American society. The doctrine of religious liberty had, indeed, been admitted by Protestantism as the formal principle of the Reformation, yet the remaining pressure of traditional and churchly authority had largely checked the right in its actual exercise. The Protestant churches of Europe had learned the primary lesson of toleration, but had failed to perceive the broad distinction between such toleration and complete religious liberty. The latter was rather a theory than a living experiment. On American soil such liberty more readily won for itself both recognition and authority. Civil regulations restraining it were gradually repealed. Illicit assumptions were rebuked and resisted, and the freest expression of individual conviction on all religious questions became the controlling law. The experiment had, indeed, its dangers. The doctrine sometimes bore tasteless or evil fruit. In some instances it even threatened to vitiate Christianity itself. Yet it cannot be questioned that American theology has consequently had freer range and a wider influence, or that the American

Church rests on firmer supports and holds a firmer place in the popular respect. American Presbyterianism least of all has had reason to apprehend the issues of such a test, for religious liberty is incorporated as a principle into its constitution, and has been glorified again and again by its battles and its sufferings for the truth. Notwithstanding occasional struggles along the somewhat shadowy border-lines between freedom and license on one hand or between freedom and authority on the other, the annals of our own Church bear noble record to the fact that it has been a free Church as well as a Church for the people. God grant that its loyalty to the cardinal doctrine of religious liberty—a doctrine vital to all Protestantism—may never be impaired!

SPECIFIC CONDITIONS OF GROWTH.

Besides these four generic conditions, which have affected more or less vitally all forms of religious life on this continent, there are certain specific conditions peculiarly affecting our own Church and largely determining its character and its development. Of these the first is *our special type of theology*, considered both intrinsically and in comparison with other theological beliefs. It is a historic truth that Calvinism, though one in genus, has always existed in

several species more or less distinct, characterized chiefly by the relative elevation or depression of some particular element, or by some special combination or arrangement of the several elements composing the system. The main occasions for such variations are found in the peculiarities of individual minds, in national temperament and characteristics, in philosophical systems and tendencies, and in other natural and ethical causes. Some foundation for them also appears in the widely-varied forms and connections in which the truths common to the system are presented by inspired minds in the Scripture itself. Such varieties have, from time to time, appeared even in Europe, as the history of European Calvinism abundantly demonstrates; in this country, for various reasons, they have always been manifest. No single species of Calvinism has at any time been able to gain complete supremacy, or to stand forth historically as the sole representative of the common system. Turretin has shared the sceptre with Edwards, and Edwards with Turretin. Diverse theories have been constrained by the pressure of common necessities to recognize, and for the most part to respect, each other. Wherever any of these varieties have attempted to take entire control of the Church, the issue has always been a loss of vigor and fruitfulness; and in some instances, as in the Wars of the Roses, the attempt

has ended in internecine conflict, disruption and decline. The periods of relative prosperity and growth have invariably been those in which these differentiated species have appreciated their common relations to the one generic system, and have been content to dwell and act together. American Calvinism is thus composite in character—generically one, specifically different, sometimes divergent. It cannot be otherwise; and consequently, the true law of existence and of fruitfulness must ever be a law of balances, adjustments, reconciliations. There must be no war between the red rose and the white.

Considered comparatively, American Calvinism has also been modified by its contact with other theological systems, and especially by its relations to the popular mind, upon whose acceptance its outward prospering has been dependent. As it has doubtless influenced other theological systems by the strong impression it ever makes, it has in turn been affected and in some measure moulded by their antithetic teaching. Especially it is important to note that, coming before the people as before a jury, it has been constrained to drop off all assumptions of authority, to lay aside technical and abstract conceptions, to state itself in the most lucid and practical forms, to give reasons, proofs, demonstrations, and thus to commend itself comparatively to the popular respect.

It has, therefore, become a preachable and a preached theology, finding its best developments rather in the pulpit than in the theological chair, and holding its place in American thought chiefly through the living ministry who from age to age have proclaimed it. Men like the Tennents and Davies and Witherspoon, like Edwards and Hopkins and Dwight, have given to American Calvinism its least technical and scholastic, its most flexible and persuasive and fruitful, forms of expression. And if these practical exigences have tended to repress the growth of what may be described as a more symmetrical type of speculative dogmatism, formed after the models of the seventeenth century, they have created a species of Calvinistic teaching no whit less scriptural, less strong, less prolific of good. Our Calvinism, therefore, is and must continue to be a preached and a preachable Calvinism—Calvinism ever addressing itself directly to the mind and heart and conscience of the people, Calvinism supremely concerned with the souls of men, and wielding every divine truth embodied in it under the awful pressure of a scriptural interest in human salvation. Whether even this type of Calvinism does not make too great demand upon the average thinking capacity to be in a broad sense popular—whether it does not contain too many recondite elements and require too much of close study

and of thorough ratiocination to secure the ready allegiance of all varieties and grades of mind—whether, consequently, it must not remain in some degree the religion of a class until the masses are sufficiently cultured theologically to receive it,—it would be difficult absolutely to deny.

Our type of polity furnishes the second of these special conditions. Like our theology, this polity is a thoroughly systematic construction, resting, as we believe, on solid scriptural foundations and shaped in accordance with clear scriptural principles gradually developed and improved by three centuries of extensive experiment, and justifying itself to our minds by the most careful tests of equity and by its marked illustration of the holy charities of the gospel. Under that polity, and through it in part, American Presbyterianism has grown and ripened from the period of its colonial planting down to the present hour, at times embarrassed by the discovery that even the best government, administered by erring human hands, may prove inadequate; at times humiliated by the sad issues that have resulted from attempting to administer that government in a temper at variance with its true spirit; yet in the main satisfied in view of the long experiment, and proud of a system which, in its principles, its methods and its fruits, has shown itself so deserving of allegiance. Under

a different polity, less in affiliation with its doctrine and its temper, it is hardly probable that the Presbyterian Church in America could have attained its present position; to that polity no small proportion both of its growth and of its influence is due.

Yet it must be admitted that our type of government, like our type of doctrine, has to some extent limited the development to which, considered in other aspects, it has so largely contributed. In a form of society like ours, where tendencies strongly democratic and tendencies strongly aristocratic, or even monarchical, are alike manifest, it is not strange that varieties of polity more strongly marked by the one or the other of these tendencies should vie with our own for popular approval and support. It is also obvious that a system characterized by so many balances and adjustments, apparently intricate and even difficult in application, should sometimes awaken objections and be thrown aside for simpler, but at the same time less effectual, conceptions of what the Christian Church in its polity should be. There are also exigences, as the history of American Christianity has shown, in which all forms of Church government betray their weakness rather than their strength; and it would be rash to assert that the popular estimate of American Presbyterianism has never

been unfavorably affected by such historic experiences. The polity through which we have grown into vigor and efficiency has sometimes bound, and may yet bind, us so closely as to check healthful circulation and to repress the free pulsations of the very life which it was ordained to bless.

There are two other special conditions which deserve careful consideration, but which can only be named in this connection—the third, as manifested in *our type of worship and of Christian activity;* the fourth, as apparent in *our denominational relations to the spirit of the age* and to certain marked tendencies in American life.

OUR ACTUAL GROWTH.

In the light of these conditions, generic and special, it becomes easy to read at a glance *the actual history of American Presbyterianism.* The true character of the original nucleus and organization, the nature of the adopting act of 1729, the ground and secret of the sad rupture of 1741, the coalescing agencies in the process of reunion in 1758, the growth amid diversities till the formation of the continental assembly in 1788, the real meaning of that decisive step in our establishment as a national Church, the rapid expansion and maturing that followed during the first decades of the present century, the gradual

rise of parties and of conflicting interests and tendencies, the pitiful division of 1837, the separate career of the fragments of the divided Church, the reunion of 1870, with all that accompanied or has followed it, and the present temper and attitude and prospects of the Church, now once more united,—all these are easily read and understood in the clear light of these regulative conditions. These also account for the external growth as well as the historic events recorded in the annals of our beloved Church. Its rise from the main fountain in Maryland and Pennsylvania, its northward spread through New Jersey and New York, and even into New England, its southerly sweep along the Atlantic coast, where French Huguenotism had prepared the way, its westward movement along these various parallels of latitude till it had reached the Alleghanies, and through their three great passes had flowed over into Ohio and Kentucky and the territories adjacent, its ever-widening and yet deepening current toward and beyond the Mississippi, and its present continental position, occupying, if we may include with ourselves the Southern branch, every State west of the Hudson, every Territory from Arizona to New Mexico, and even the fair young empire that sits as queen on the golden shore of the Pacific,—all this wonderful growth is attributable, under the divine favor and the

inherent potencies of a spiritual Christianity, to these quickening and determining principles. The position of our body among evangelical denominations, the hold it has gained upon popular confidence and respect, the social power it is wielding for Christ and his cause, the place it occupies in American Christianity, the influence it is already exerting upon the Presbyterianism and the Protestantism of the world,—these also must be recognized as the direct and the beautiful result of the same organizing laws.

Contemplated in this light, *the present condition of our Church* calls for the profoundest gratitude and for holy exultation. Contrast the seven ministers and the handful of churches, weak, scattered, undeveloped, which constituted the first presbytery of 1706, with the present aggregate of 36 synods and 173 presbyteries, 4706 ministers and 4999 churches, 506,034 communicants and 520,452 Sabbath-school children, and hardly less than two millions of worshipers. Contrast the rude edifices in which our fathers at Rehoboth and Snow Hill and elsewhere worshiped God, and the scant contributions which they were able to make toward the support of religion, with the multitude of our sanctuaries, valued at tens of millions, and with our contributions in 1874–5 of $6,900,000 toward church purposes, and of $2,725,000 toward the general

cause of evangelization. Contrast the position of our Church at the outset—a feeble sect in the midst of sects already established and dominant, suspected in New England, imprisoned in the person of Makemie in New York, despised in Maryland and banished from Virginia—with its present almost central place in American society, free to plant itself in city or country from one edge of the continent to the other, its principles and teaching respected and its influence everywhere felt and welcomed—a Church known and honored of men as one of the chief agencies in the spiritual culture of the American people. Contrast its primitive attitude as essentially a foreign Church, importing alike its ministers and its membership, and largely dependent on the generous support which Scotch and English Presbyterians gave it, clinging tremblingly to the very words of its Confession even as to the religious functions of the civil magistracy, and adhering punctiliously to every shred of European law or usage. Contrast this with its present attitude as a thoroughly American Church, into which all foreign elements have been dissolved, from which foreign control is excluded, having modified even its Confession to adjust it to American conceptions of freedom in both Church and State, possessing precedents and usages and a mode of administration peculiarly its own, yet having lost

nothing that is essential to its proper character, and justly recognized even in Edinburgh as truly and grandly representative of the Presbyterianism of Melville, of Knox, of Calvin himself.

In the light of such contrasts the career of American Presbyterianism, as exhibited in its various branches, must be regarded as one of the miracles of modern Christianity. It has hardly a parallel, except it be in the development of Methodism, English and American, from the small seed planted at Oxford in 1729, to its present magnificent proportions. A century ago Methodism was but just introducing itself through a few faithful preachers into Philadelphia and New York, and its entire membership on this continent numbered scarcely a thousand; now its singing legions make the continent tremble with their tread, and the song of their triumphs, like the fabled drum-beat of England, is heard well-nigh round the globe. A century ago American Presbyterianism was represented by 133 ministers only; its churches, feeble and scattered, were scarcely more numerous, and its membership cannot have exceeded six or eight thousand. The single State of Missouri now contains more Presbyterian ministers, churches and members, with far ampler resources, than could then have been found in all the continent. The number of both ministers and churches has, during the century,

increased more than thirtyfold; even during the past fifty years our ministry have multiplied sixfold, our churches fourfold, our membership eightfold. Such advance is hardly less than miraculous; and as we walk to-day with reverent tread about our beautiful Zion, telling her towers and bulwarks and considering the palaces of her glory, we must be blind indeed if we do not recognize in all this the sure evidence of a divine presence, and exclaim with the prophet of Israel, In his love and in his pity he redeemed us; he bare us and carried us all the days of old.

AMERICAN PRESBYTERIANISM IN THE FUTURE.

Turning at this point to consider *the future of American Presbyterianism*, as that future is indicated and to some extent determined by the present and the past, we pass into another and a more difficult sphere of investigation. The questions that confront us are incomparably more solemn, and the summons to personal duty becomes immediate and commanding. What is the true line of progress for a Church so constituted, so located, so endowed? What are the conditions under which such progress may be anticipated? Is our Church to preserve its unity from generation to generation, and to go on expanding with the continent century by century? Is American Presbyterianism ever to be unified, and through

one vast, earnest, effective organism to fulfill its sublime mission in and for American society? And what are to be the relations of our Church, and of American Presbyterianism, to the Churches of our general type of faith and order and to the cause of Presbyterianism throughout the world, and also to that ultimate unification of Protestantism on which the salvation of our race and the introduction of the millennial age seem to be depending? Around such questions we may reverently linger for a little season.

DENOMINATIONAL UNITY PRESERVED.

The life of a great denomination is always exposed to perils. It has a general guaranty of permanence so far as it holds to the truth, is animated by the right spirit and engaged in the distinctive work given to it by the Master. But such permanence is dependent also on many subordinate conditions, chiefly natural and human; and a Church which at one time seems strong, vigorous, enduring as an oak, may in an hour of sudden tempest be prostrated in the dust. Some new practical issue, some absorbing question of policy, some collision of relative rights or privileges, some wild development of party, some theological dogma or philosophic speculation, may sunder the strongest ecclesiastical ties and rend the soundest body into quivering fragments. The

records of Protestantism, and even of Presbyterianism, both European and American, furnish sad confirmation of this statement. One of the clearest lessons of modern Church history is the truth that sects, like men, are constantly exposed to such dangers, and that they preserve their existence only by the strictest compliance with the laws, the principles, the conditions, under which such existence was first established.

The hope that our Church will be wholly freed from such perils is fallacious; the anticipation of their presence and operation is reasonable; the dark possibility which such presence involves must be recognized. It has, indeed, been predicted that these divisive influences, happily arrested for the time, will soon flow in upon us in possibly increased volume; that current varieties in thought, usage, tendency, though now freely allowed, will in the future become exclusive and intolerant of each other; and that the fair fabric of union which this generation is engaged in rearing will finally give way before these coming tempests, and will lie, like the temple of Solomon before the armies of Nebuchadnezzar, a ruin utter and terrible. Attention is also called to specific dangers which may arise to threaten our peace; to the many difficult questions of principle and of method which must spring up in carrying forward our exten-

sive denominational work; to the liability to an excessive concentration of power at civic centres and in the various boards and agencies of our Church; to the perils involved in the existence of a denominational press, largely independent and irresponsible, yet holding in its hands not merely the reputation of individuals, but also the good name and prosperity of the denomination; to the natural tendency of educational institutions, especially theological, to become the active representatives and propagators of some peculiarity in doctrine or tendency, and by their rivalries and wranglings to break up the general concord; to the possible rise of some new heresiarch, departing from the essential truths of grace, and, like the red dragon in the Apocalypse, drawing after him the third part even of the stars of heaven. Where such specific dangers are not directly apprehended, it still is feared that the fine balance of doctrine maintained in our Confession and catechisms will not always be preserved in the current belief and teaching; that the antitheses which have always existed in historic Calvinism, and which must always exist in a system so complex and comprehensive, will yet break forth into antagonism and rupture; that liberty will finally degenerate into license or orthodoxy into dogmatism, and license plot against orthodoxy or dogmatism as-

sail liberty, until disruption ends the unnatural alliance between them. We are reminded that, of all men, Presbyterians are most likely to differ, and to differ around issues involving principle, and therefore to differ conscientiously, intensely, destructively, and that no branch of the Presbyterian body, European or American, has ever long escaped such differentiating and disintegrating experiences. And it is consequently judged that the holding together of a million Presbyterians in one Church for a whole century would be a miracle, to be credited only when the wondering eyes of the world shall have seen it.

May we not grant the existence of such liabilities without acquiescing in the conclusion toward which they point? Under the beneficent influences of the recent union our Church is rapidly passing into a new condition of coherence, strength, maturity. Without sacrificing a single principle or surrendering any historic quality, it is assuming a new position and entering upon a grander career. Its coalescing elements are consciously strengthened, improved, utilized, by their combination. Elements of weakness or of discord on either side are becoming eliminated or neutralized. As the Church has broadened in sphere and become more truly national it has steadily grown stronger rather than weaker. And as this articulating process grows forward

we may reasonably expect the development of new bonds, the growth of mutual confidence, the increase of enthusiasm around common interests, and, above all, the cordial absorption of the whole body in the grand, the continental work, which the Master is already spreading before it. Amidst such fresh experiences and under the inspirations of such a new career these particular dangers will grow less and less; mischievous men will be less and less able to work mischief; the shibboleths of party and the battle-cry of factions will gradually be silenced; divisive tendencies of whatever sort will be arrested, and our union will be preserved.

The central point in such unity will be found in a cordial acceptance on all sides of the cardinal principles of the Calvinistic system as embodied in our common Confession of Faith. We are agreed in regarding our doctrinal symbols, not as above Scripture or co-ordinate with Scripture, but as substantially representative of the Scripture so far as God has given us grace to apprehend it. We receive these symbols as containing, in the language of the adopting act of 1727, "in all the essential and necessary articles good forms of sound words," or, in the phraseology of the uniting act of 1758, as "an orthodox and excellent system of doctrine, founded on the word of God." In the language of the union of 1870,

we alike "sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures," each party in that union cordially "recognizing the other as a sound and orthodox body according to the principles of the Confession." In this memorable compact, historically interpreted, no interest either of orthodoxy or of liberty is compromised. All imputations, all assumptions, are abandoned; varieties of statement or explanation not subversive of the common system are allowed; no theory or school takes precedence of any other; excessive literalism and careless license in interpretation are alike excluded; mere toleration gives place to positive confidence; conservative and progressive elements coalesce; and a true unity, on a basis manly and Christian and scriptural, and therefore enduring, is happily established. Further liberty than is thus secured no cordial Presbyterian desires; further guarantees than these no generous Presbyterian will demand; and so long as the principles and the spirit of this compact are preserved, the union of the Presbyterian Church through all the future is secure. Generation after generation, century after century, it may live on, ever increasing in magnitude, in vigor, in fruitfulness, under these happy conditions. Let the reckless spirit of agitation and the equally reckless spirit of dogmatism be every-

where rebuked. Let the disposition to exalt special theories above generic doctrines and to create schools and parties around minor and technical differences be everywhere repressed. Let that narrow temper of denominationalism which magnifies every slight departure from tenet or usage, and frowns upon all affiliation with other Christian sects or people, and counts our blue the only color in the rainbow that spans the heaven of the Church of God on earth, be everywhere put to silence. Let a just sense of the worth of our union and a reasonable faith in its permanence be steadily cultivated. Let order and freedom be ever clasped in loving embrace. Let the truth common and dear to all be exalted as supreme. Let a wise estimate of our responsibility as a Church of Christ and of our grand opportunity in this land and in the world be developed in every mind. Let these harmonizing conditions continue to exist, and the sacred alliance which the men of this generation have formed will be preserved from age to age, even down to the millennial day.

AMERICAN PRESBYTERIANISM UNIFIED.

If this hope of denominational unity rests on adequate foundation, it justifies a further inquiry respecting the *possible unification of American Presbyterianism.* It has been questioned whether

the combination of all the existing varieties of that Presbyterianism in one Church is a result to be desired or sought; whether there are not vast benefits secured through the present distribution which would be sacrificed in such union; whether one great national Church, numbering even now eight thousand ministers and as many congregations, with a million communicants and nearly four millions of adherents, would not become too strong, proud, ambitious, to be endured. It may be that the Master would find it needful to save a Church having such members, culture, resources, influence, from deadness in belief, from confidence in self, from political aspirations and a false materialistic development, by sending upon it some sudden whirlwind of division and scattering it again into separate and belligerent fragments.

But though it be certain that some such issue would follow the unification of Presbyterianism, apart from correspondent increase in faith, in love, in every Christian grace, must we still believe that the present disparted, fragmentary, partly hostile condition is divinely intended to be the permanent state of a group of churches resting on the same or on kindred Confessions, governed by substantially the same polity, and so largely alike in worship, spirit, tendency? We cannot well refrain from inquiring whether the differences now existing are in their nature per-

manent and ineradicable; whether they are likely to increase or diminish with time; whether, under the attraction of what is common to all, these churches may not hereafter be drawn more and more closely toward each other; whether, at last, they will not, under the action of these affinities, ascend to a higher plane and destiny by becoming, in a purely spiritual sense of the term, one national Presbyterian Church, such as the fathers dreamed of establishing, and such as many of the sons most ardently desire.

In answering such queries we may note the following points: *First*, That the things in which these churches are agreed are confessed by all to be of immeasurably greater moment than the things in which they consciously differ; that in doctrine, in polity, in order and method and spirit, they are substantially one; that this sense of oneness is central, vital, ineradicable, and, like the law of gravity, is silently yet potentially operating to draw these kindred fragments into actual union.

Secondly, That as a historic fact those differences which have from time to time divided American Presbyterians have, under the influence of these attractions, grown weaker rather than stronger with time; that those of foreign origin have gradually melted away as the American spirit has surrounded and wrought upon

them; and that by successive acts of union these churches have confessed it to be needless, foolish, even wicked, to hold asunder, for such incidental reasons, what God has so vitally joined together.

And *thirdly*, That the dominant tendency of the age, especially in Protestant Christianity, is toward the repression of whatever is divisive among Christian sects, and the cultivation in all available forms of spiritual and even organic union; that diversities between kindred denominations which might have justified division a century or even a generation ago justify division no longer; that both internal experiences and the external assaults of unbelief and of a corrupted Christianity are compelling Protestantism to cherish with new interest the grand central verities in which all evangelical sects are agreed; and that Presbyterianism especially has seemed to be passing providentially through such a spiritual process of affiliation as if in preparation for some organic agreement in the future.

How rapidly such tendencies may make themselves felt, or how far their influence may reach, it would be unwise to predict. In the absence of the spirit of prophecy, it may not be wrong to whisper the language of hope. In the case, for example, of that venerable body of Calvinists of European origin first planted in the colony of New York long before the introduction of British

Presbyterianism—a body whose general doctrine and order are so like our own, whose history runs so closely parallel with ours, and whose catechism we have commended as worthy of study in our churches; a body in respect to which the main question urgent seems to be whether it shall be called Presbyterian or we be called Reformed,—in this case, is it unreasonable to anticipate that with time ancestral memories will so far become dim and special peculiarities so far diminish, and that the generic sense of community in faith and interest and destiny will be so far developed, that another centennial year will not witness this venerable Church standing side by side with ours, consciously like it in almost everything but a name, yet separated by a name, and a name only?

In the case of those Presbyterian bodies which have preserved more distinctively foreign titles and usages, and which are now separated from us chiefly by certain preferences as to worship and communion, may we not on similar grounds anticipate a relative subsidence of such peculiarities, the rise on either side of an increasing interest based on closer practical fellowship, and a progressive oneness in spirit and substance which will in due time demand a corresponding oneness in form? Not, indeed, by violent conquest on our part or by mere absorption or sheer

crowding, such as drives the weaker to the wall, is such oneness to be secured, but rather through a generous appreciation of these kindred churches in their peculiarities, through sincere respect for every variety in taste or teaching or practice not subversive of the common faith, and especially through the culture in ourselves and in them of the broad, sweet, holy sense of a common inheritance in Christ.

In respect to the Presbyterian Church South, now separated from us by experiences which, like bruises, do not seem to admit immediate remedy, it is not improper to suggest that the thoughtful Christian observer, studying alike the causes of that separation and the forces tending toward reunion, need not be despondent of the issue. To such a mind it will become obvious, on the closest examination, that there are no distinctive principles in the case, even respecting the true character and functions of the Church of Christ on earth, which are so vital as to require for their due maintenance on this continent an independent organization, permanently separating itself by broad lines from all other Presbyterian bodies. Such a mind will also readily apprehend the casual nature of the forces which have led to this sundering of old and precious ties, and will appreciate the enduring character of the many ligatures yet unsevered which are steadily pro-

testing against that rupture and tenderly pleading for union. And every such mind must judge that, while our Church can never forsake her ancient testimonies against sin or give up her ancestral right to stand by the State in times of peril, she owes it to herself and to the gospel to allow no animosities, to admit no sectional prejudices, to make no unreasonable claims or conditions, but rather to cherish toward these alienated brethren the warmest and purest Christian friendship, even while believing their alienation to be without just foundation. Such a Church as ours can afford to pass with a quiet smile the assumptions of superior orthodoxy, or even the present charge of latitudinarianism or of affiliation with infidelity, regarding these as the manifestations in a few minds of an emotional excitement of the rhetorical type rather than the sober, honest, permanent judgment entertained by the multitude of the ministry and membership in the Southern communion. Such a Church as ours, ignoring these temporary trifles, and breathing still the temper of Christian love, while adhering loyally to all that is due to principle and to honor, may wisely wait for the glad hour when that judgment will assert itself even in the face of mistaken leadership, and when the healing agencies of time shall have prepared the way not merely for fraternal relations, but for a

fraternal union. That hour will assuredly come. Living Churches cannot be kept asunder by dead issues; kindred Churches cannot be held apart by minor differences. The grand essential agreements in the case, the conscious possession of a common heritage in belief and history, the returning sense of unity deeper and broader than all diversities, and especially the developing consciousness of one great mission to this land and to the world, will bring these sundered Churches together and make them truly and heartily one. God grant it even in our time!

PRESBYTERIAN FEDERATION.

If we may thus reasonably anticipate not only the continuance of our own denominational unity, but also the ultimate unification of American Presbyterianism, we may, on the foundation furnished by these two hopes, contemplate further the still broader question already stated—whether any *combination of Presbyterianism throughout the world* is possible, and whether American Presbyterianism, and especially our own Church, has any special duty with respect to such a consummation. Let us glance at this question for a moment.

The fact that such a federation of the Presbyterianism of the world has already been undertaken is one of deep significance, and the further

fact that—to use the apt expression of Professor Blaikie—"the first articulate call" for such a federation came from our own Church, commits us especially to every effort requisite to make this movement successful. In answer to that call and to the like action of other Presbyterian bodies, especially in the British Isles, representatives of twenty-two such organizations and of more than fifteen thousand particular churches have already in solemn assembly agreed on the basis of an alliance in which the Presbyterianism of the world may become united, and through which the truth, the order, the interests, common to all may be defended, supported and diffused. Should that basis of federation be ratified, American Presbyterianism will be set at once into new and most interesting and influential relations to the Presbyterianism of the Old World, and our own Church—much the largest Presbyterian organization on earth, and equal in size to all of the Presbyterian bodies in Scotland, England and Ireland combined, including the eleven hundred Calvinistic churches of Wales—will be brought into connections with that Presbyterianism full of interest and fraught with the highest responsibility. We are thus, in virtue of our numbers, our principles and our representative position, providentially summoned and committed to a work bearing not only upon the

closer combination of all varieties of our common faith and order, but also upon the harmonizing and unifying of Protestantism itself in preparation for the final battles of the gospel with false religion and with human unbelief. Are we ready for that summons?

Without adverting specifically to the objections urged against this federation—that the conception is essentially impractical, and will, in fact, produce nothing but a showy convention for talk and debate, or that, if successful, it would ere long degenerate into some organic union, some œcumenical General Assembly dangerous to local liberties, or that it would in practice simply develop an excessive spirit of sect, and thus separate the Presbyterian body disastrously from other sections of Protestantism,—without adverting specifically to such objections, we may simply note two decisive considerations in the opposite direction.

1. *The Presbyterianism of the nineteenth century owes it to itself to assume this broad catholic attitude in the presence of Christendom.* It is a manifest fact that, divided as the Presbyterian Churches have been by national or provincial differences, by theological theories and tendencies, by varieties in taste and usage and worship —broken up as we are now into separate sections and schools, far apart in thought and impulse,

intensely conscious of each difference and too dimly conscious of the underlying unity—our common Presbyterianism has never yet made, is not now making, upon the Christian world the one distinct, potent impression which it is in itself capable of producing. Christendom has seen it only in "broken lights," generally refracting, sometimes distorting, its true image. Our polity has been administered in such various methods, and often in a spirit so much at variance with its scriptural structure and temper, that multitudes have been blinded to its better quality and its beneficent working. Our faith has been so tenacious and so militant in its varieties, so much a battle-ground for speculative antagonisms rather than a harvest-field of truth full of grace and blessing for the world, that myriads have turned away from it and found refuge in other systems of belief, less ample, less harmonious, but more nutritious to the soul. Such is the plain witness of history; such in great degree is the impression which Presbyterianism is now making on the mind and the heart of Christendom.

Must it be so for ever? Do we not owe it to ourselves and to our common heritage to correct such impressions by exhibiting our Presbyterianism in its unity rather than its diversities? Why should we conceal the intrinsic excellence

of our common form of government by the smoke of our warfare around specific varieties of usage or expediency—by the clamor of our discussions respecting some speculative element in the system itself? Why should we suffer small differentia in doctrinal statement to be so thrust forward, so emphasized as vital, so wrestled with and fought for, that neither the world nor even ourselves are able to see what the Calvinistic system of doctrine, considered in its generic completeness, really is? And will it not be a vast advance if the Presbyterianism of the twentieth century should be able to rise above such diversities, and to clasp hands for the first time since the age of Calvin around that common Confession in which the great essential truths of the gospel seem to us to be embodied, and which, therefore, is dearer to all than any of these differences can possibly be? With no disloyalty to any specific truth or theory, with most cordial recognition of the right to differ on secondary questions in that loving temper which the consciousness of essential union must engender, may not that Presbyterianism, by being thus true to its most vital principles, make a new impression on the thought and heart of Christendom, and so win for itself a grander place in the one Church of Christ on earth?

2. *Presbyterianism owes this also to the general*

cause of evangelical Protestantism. All thoughtful minds recognize the unifying of that Protestantism as one of the necessary issues of the future —a result suggested by the scriptural view of the Church, at least in its millennial condition, expressed in the prayer of our Lord and in the universal hope of his disciples, indicated in the earliest Christian creed, and incorporated in the golden doctrine of our own Confession respecting the communion of saints. As a materialistic Christianity already proposes to organize itself in a triple hierarchy, with its centre at Rome, its right arm in Constantinople and its left arm in London, so our spiritual Christianity must ultimately concentrate itself for defence, and for aggression also, in what will be at least the germ of the Church millennial. This result is not, indeed, to be secured by processes of external organization merely, through mere unities in name and form, and still less by the universal abandonment of method and order in the house of God, or by any ignoring of the scriptural principles on which the Church is founded. Far from it; but rather by a richer development of piety, by a sweeter sense of union in Christ, by holier consecration to the common Head and closer fellowship with him in the mighty task of subduing our humanity unto himself. That such a high, blessed, potential union of the divided fragments of the one

Church of God on earth will yet come, as the consummating step of our Christianity toward the millennial glory, is the anticipation, the hope, the prayer, of all believing hearts.

But what relations does our Presbyterianism sustain to such a consummation, and what especially would be the influence of the proposed Presbyterian federation on this broader result? It is to be remembered that no other type of Protestantism is so nearly cosmopolitan as ours, no other form of Protestant belief has been so widely diffused, or has become rooted and prevalent in so many lands. Presbyterianism is, in fact, but little less œcumenical than Romanism itself; and this is due not simply to the fact that it was first in the triad of politics and first in the types of doctrine which originated with the Reformation, but also to the further fact that it contains elements which commend it widely, possesses peculiar machinery for propagation and is strongly animated by the propagative spirit. It has consequently come to occupy a special place in the series of Protestant sects. As they stand in group, it is Presbyterianism rather than Prelacy or Independency which is central. Moreover, the marked emphasis which it lays upon the doctrine of the one Church of Christ, invisible and catholic, and the prominence it habitually gives to the duty of the communion of saints, both pledge it to the

broadest Christian fellowship and attract toward it the confidence and love of all other Christian denominations. Is it not obvious for these reasons that Presbyterianism, especially as confederated, has a special work to do in the unifying of Protestantism, and that the Presbyterian Church, and especially our own, will prove untrue to her historic principles and spirit if she does not become, in the hands of God, a conspicuous agent in bringing—to use the prophetic words of Calvin—"the separated Churches into one"? And who that properly appreciates the grandeur of such a mission would not add the heroic declaration of the great Reformer, in his letter to Cranmer, as he contemplated the sundered body of Christ and longed to see its holy communion restored: "So far as I am concerned, if I can be of any use, I will readily pass over ten seas to effect that object"? God grant that the hopes and prayers of Calvin and his associates, Continental and British, for the unifying of Protestantism, may be speedily realized; and God grant that in that process our own Church, the Church of Calvin, may be found in the future, as in the past, first and foremost!

CONCLUSION.

Fathers and brethren: so far as the limits of one brief hour would permit, I have endeavored

to bring before you some of the more urgent considerations spontaneously suggesting themselves in this historic year respecting the past and the future of American Presbyterianism, especially as represented in our own beloved Church. Standing still only on the threshold of the vast theme I am constrained to pause with simple mention of the two primary duties which such a survey enforces: *Gratitude for the Past, Consecration for the Future.* I trust that these kindred duties are at this sacred hour emphasizing themselves distinctly and tenderly in every conscience. I trust that psalms of commemoration and hymns of joy and hope are ready to break forth from every heart. I trust that some becoming sense of the grandeur of this hour, and some appropriate vision of our personal responsibility, as representatives of such a Church at such a time, are animating us with unwonted zeal. I trust that, while we are grateful for what, through grace divine, the fathers wrought, we shall catch some measure of their spirit, and by the same grace be enabled to do as well the solemn and the significant work now devolving upon us. I trust that we shall esteem it our joy and our glory to have our lives now and always builded in as living stones into a structure so vast, so strong, so beautiful, as our Zion is yet to be. And I trust that, as we gather

inspiration from these rare, sweet glimpses of a future too great to be adequately measured by present thought—as we go forward to the work before us, drawing courage from the grand possibilities thus stretching out before the Church we love and serve—we may be stimulated also by due remembrance of the brevity of that fleeting day in which it is given to us to live and work. Let us hear at this hour the voices of the beloved and honored dead, our brethren in this service, who, nearly fourscore in number, have during the past year finished their part in this great development. The venerated Dickinson, whose name is for ever associated with the *Auburn Declaration*, and the accomplished Condit, both of whom had occupied the highest positions in the Church, the venerable fathers Chambers and Davidson, the diligent and able historian Gillett, Macdonald, preacher and scholar at Princeton, the honored Sprague, annalist and biographer of the Church, Johnston, patriarch and pillar of Presbyterianism in the West, Sutphen and Buckingham, Henderson and Fillmore and Mattocks, and many other holy brethren who with these have ceased from their labors,—all these, a great cloud of witnesses, are—how impressively!—summoning us to duty and service for the Master. LET US BE UP AND DOING.

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C.

Author

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